APOLLONIUS' *ARGONAUTICA*
A CALLIMACHEAN EPIC

MNEMOSYNE

BIBLIOTHECA CLASSICA BATAVA

COLLEGERUNT

J.M. BREMER · L.F. JANSSEN · H. PINKSTER

H.W. PLEKET · C.J. RUIJGH · P.H. SCHRIJVERS

BIBLIOTHECAE FASCICULOS EDENDOS CURAVIT

C.J. RUIJGH, KLASSIEK SEMINARIUM, OUDE TURFMARKT 129, AMSTERDAM

SUPPLEMENTUM CENTESIMUM QUADRAGESIMUM SECUNDUM

MARY MARGOLIES DeFOREST

APOLLONIUS' *ARGONAUTICA*
A CALLIMACHEAN EPIC

APOLLONIUS' *ARGONAUTICA*
A CALLIMACHEAN EPIC

BY

MARY MARGOLIES DeFOREST

E.J. BRILL
LEIDEN · NEW YORK · KÖLN
1994

The paper in this book meets the guidelines for permanence and durability of the Committee on Production Guidelines for Book Longevity of the Council on Library Resources.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

DeForest, Mary Margolies.
Apollonius' Argonautica : a Callimachean epic / Mary Margolies DeForest.
p. cm. — (Supplements to Mnemosyne ; 142)
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 9004100172
1. Apollonius, Rhodius. Argonautica. 2. Epic poetry, Greek—History and criticism. 3. Argonauts (Greek mythology) in literature. 4. Callimachus—Influence. I. Title. II. Series: Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava. Supplementum ; 142.
PA3872.Z4D44 1994
863'.01—dc20 94-35522
CIP

Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme

[Mnemosyne / Supplementum]
Mnemosyne : bibliotheca classica Batava. Supplementum. – Leiden ; New York ; Köln : Brill.
Früher Schriftenreihe
142. Margolies DeForest, Mary: Apollonius' Argonautica. – 1994
Margolies DeForest, Mary:
Apollonius' Argonautica : a callimachean epic / by Mary Margolies DeForest. – Leiden ; New York ; Köln : Brill, 1994
(Mnemosyne : Supplementum ; 142)
Zugl.: Boulver, Univ. of Colorado, Diss., 1981
ISBN 90-04-10017-2

ISSN 0169-8958
ISBN 90 04 10017 2

© Copyright 1994 by E.J. Brill, Leiden, The Netherlands

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by E.J. Brill provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910 Danvers MA 01923, USA. Fees are subject to change.

PRINTED IN THE NETHERLANDS

This book is affectionately dedicated to Daniel F. Margolies, Charles R. Beye, and Gilbert Lawall

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 The Birdcage 1

Chapter 2 Apollonius, Homer, and Callimachus 18

Chapter 3 Beginning With Apollo 37

Chapter 4 Heracles and Jason 47

Chapter 5 The Three Worlds 70

Chapter 6 Literary Terms 86

Chapter 7 Medea Bewitched 107

Chapter 8 The Awakening 125

Chapter 9 The Golden Fleece 143

Bibliography 153

Index 158

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book originated in a seminar taught by Charles R. Beye at the American School for Classical Studies in Athens. Inspired by his insights, I wrote my dissertation on Apollonius at the University of Colorado under the direction of Joy K. King and William M. Calder, III. During that time I was helped by the encouragement and suggestions of my friends Dennis Gilkey, Emily Batinski, and Nina Sakun.

From 1981, when I got my doctorate, to the present, I have rewritten this book many times. I owe a great debt to the intellectual generosity of friends and colleagues, whose help I gratefully acknowledge: Mary-Kay Gamel, John McEnroe, Abby Werlock, James Ring, Dorcas Watters, George Engel, Chris and Emily Sulavic, Lettie Tourville, Dwight Lindley, Barbara Cipriani, Russell Blackwood, Irma Rosenfeld, Rouben Cholakian, Alicia Cech, Sharon Gormley, John Mattingly, Jo McClellan, Vernon Perry, Tanya Gardiner-Scott, Julie Yates, and David Shive.

I especially wish to thank friends who have read the manuscript with meticulous care, sometimes many times, and whose penetrating questions have helped me both to clarify my ideas and to formulate them: Karen Schantz, John DeForest, Michael Krezja, Margaret Hurley, Barbara Hill, Robert Lamberton, Joy K. King, Nancy Moore, James Clauss, Cindy Roberts, Joan O'Brien, Bob Johnson, Aaron Baker, Edward V. George, Charles R. Beye, and Gilbert Lawall.

I take full responsibility for any errors that have eluded their watchful eyes.

Mary DeForest

CHAPTER ONE

THE BIRDCAGE

How Jason and the Argonauts sailed across the sea to win the Golden Fleece is an old story, old even to the characters of Homer (*Od.* 12.70).[1] Part of the saga, the romance of Jason and Medea, grew into one of the most powerful love stories in literature. In the fifth century, Euripides defined the basic outlines of the principal characters: the treacherous Greek and the barbarian witch. Because of her magical powers, Medea did not play the passive role of female victim, abandoned by her man. After incinerating her rival, she flew off in a chariot drawn by snakes to begin life anew in Athens. The only mythological heroine to have a career, Medea has cast a spell on generations of intellectual women, who saw in her the pioneer female scientist or mythological Bluestocking.[2] Apollonius' Medea seems at first to add but little to the subject of feminine power. She does not enter the *Argonautica* until it is half over, and then as a learned joke: the female hero of an epic poem. Having elbowed aside Jason and his 50 Argonauts, she stands at the center of the poem, revealed as possessing terrifying power.

The literary climate was tempestuous when Apollonius composed the *Argonautica*. A contemporary observer described the intellectual scene of third-century Alexandria as "well-fed philologists arguing

---

For quotations of Apollonius, I have usually followed the editions of Francis Vian, *Apollonios de Rhodes. Argonautiques I: Chants I–II* (Paris, 1974); Richard L. Hunter, *Apollonius of Rhodes: Argonautica Book III* (Cambridge, 1989); Enrico Livrea, *Apolloni Rhodi: Argonauticon Liber Quartus* (Florence, 1973). I have also consulted the editions of George W. Mooney, *The Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius* (Dublin, 1912); Vian, *Apollonios de Rhodes. Argonautiques II: Chant III*, 2d ed. (Paris, 1980), *Apollonios de Rhodes. Argonautiques III: Chant IV* (Paris, 1981); Guido Paduano and Massimo Fusillo, *Le Argonautiche* (Milan, 1986); Hermann Fränkel, *Apollonii Rhodii Argonautica* (1961; rev. rpt. Oxford, 1964). For Callimachus, I have followed the editions of Rudolph Pfeiffer, ed., *Callimachus*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1949–1953); Hugh Lloyd-Jones and P. J. Parsons, eds., *Supplementum Hellenisticum* (Berlin, 1983). Quotations of other ancient authors are taken from the Oxford Classical Texts. In transliterating Greek, I have used Roman letters for proper names and words that have entered English.

[1] For pre-Apollonian accounts of Jason's voyage, see Hunter, *Book III*, 14–21. Pindar's *Pythian 4* and Euripides' *Medea* are the only extensive accounts that survive.

[2] Christine de Pisan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York, 1982), 1.32.1; *Mrs. Montagu, "Queen of the Blues": Her Letters and Friendships from 1762 to 1800*, ed. Reginald Blunt (London, 1906), Vol. 2, 68.

endlessly in the birdcage of the Muses" (Timon of Phlius frag. 12 Diels). The history of Greek literature is enlivened with apocryphal feuds. "Poet vies with poet," wrote Hesiod (*Op.* 26), who was himself said to have quarreled with Homer.[3] A similar piece of biographical fiction concerns Apollonius. It has been said that the *Argonautica* aroused such a gale of disapproval that its author was blown from Alexandria to Rhodes.[4]

Apollonius' antagonist is said to have been Callimachus, an influential poet and critic, who, according to tradition and in his own remarks (*Iambi* 1, 4, 13), quarreled with many people over poetry. Callimachus defended his decision not to write "a unified, continuous song about kings or heroes in many thousands of lines" (*Ait.* frag. 1.3–5). The refusal to write an epic poem, called by modern scholars the *recusatio*, is the central, unifying theme of Callimachus' poetry. Since Apollonius wrote a unified, continuous poem about heroes in many thousands of lines, Callimachus should have disapproved of the *Argonautica* and quarreled with its author. A powerful tradition claims he did.[5] There is ample evidence for belief in a quarrel, but evidence for the actual quarrel is late and nugatory.[6] As the *Argonautica* comes to be better

---

[3] Mary R. Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore, 1981), 5; for similar feuds, 52, 57, 121.

[4] Lefkowitz who suggests that biographers invented his residence on Rhodes to explain how he got the epithet *Rhodius* (*The Lives of the Greek Poets*, 130–31).

[5] For examination of the quarrel, with bibliography, see Hans Herter, "Bericht über die Literatur zur hellenistischen Dichtung aus den Jahren 1921–1935," Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, 255 (1937), 89–91, 175–76 (*Bericht* 1), his "Bericht über die Literatur zur hellenistischen Dichtung seit dem Jahre 1921, 2: Apollonios von Rhodos," Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, 285 (1944/1955), 223–27 (*Bericht* 2), and his "Apollonios der Epiker," *RE* Supp. 13 (1973), 15–20.

[6] The writer of the *Suda* (a literary encyclopedia compiled at the end of the 10th century) confidently asserted that Apollonius was the man Callimachus attacked in his lost poem, the *Ibis* (*Suda*, *sv. Kallimachos*). The poem did not identify Apollonius or anybody else by name, since it was written "as a riddle" (εἰς ἀσάφειαν). Some scholar guessed that Callimachus' victim was Apollonius, and, according to Walter Allen, Jr., the guess became fixed in the biographical tradition ("The Epyllion: A Chapter in the History of Literary Criticism," *TAPA*, 71 [1940], 11). The remains of the *Ibis* are frags. 381–82; for information on the poem, see Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, Vol. 2, *Testimonia* 1, 23, 40.

With a similar readiness to turn speculation into fact, another ancient scholar supplied the names of the men he thought Callimachus had attacked under the symbolic title of *Telchines* (*Ait.* frag. 1.1). The gloss by the Florentine scholiast is presented by Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, Vol. 1, 3. He is called learned by Albin Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, translated from 2nd German edition by James Willis and Cornelis de Heer (New York, 1966), 710, and Herter, "Kallimachos aus Kyrene," *RE* Supp. 13 (1973), 197. He may have been Theon, a biographer of the first century B.C. (Herter, *Bericht* 1, 97). For the connection between the Telchines and epic poetry, see below, pp. 29–30.

The scholiast identified Callimachus' enemies, presumably, because they were

understood, however, most believe Apollonius was not attacked by Callimachus for writing epic poetry.[7]

Instead of speculating about Callimachus' response to the *Argonautica*, this book will examine his role in the poem's inception. Why did Apollonius write what looks like an epic poem when Callimachus, the dominant poetic voice of Alexandria, decried the writing of such poetry?[8] As the opponent of epic poetry, Callimachus plays as important

---

attacked in Callimachus' published writings (Lesky, *History of Greek Literature*, 711, Mary Lefkowitz, "The Quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius," *ZPE*, 40 [1980], 8–11). Asclepiades (*A.P.* 9.63) and Poseidippus (*A.P.* 12.168) admired Antimachus of Colophon (a fourth-century poet and friend of Plato); Praxiphanes was attacked by Callimachus. Callimachus, frag. 398, mocks Asclepiades' praise of Antimachus, as Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff noted, "Die Thukydideslegende," *Hermes*, 12 (1877), 357, n. 42. Compare Asclepiades' Λύδη καὶ γένος εἰμὶ καὶ οὔνομα, "I am Lyde both in race and name," and Callimachus' Λύδη καὶ παχὺ γράμμα καὶ οὐ τορόν, "The book *Lyde* is both fat and unclear." Rudolph Pfeiffer believes the quarrel might have arisen from Praxiphanes' disparagement of Callimachus' friend Aratus (*History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginning to the End of the Hellenistic Age* [Oxford, 1968], 135–36). See also Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, Vol. 2, *Testimonia* 10b–d; C. O. Brink, "Callimachus and Aristotle: An Inquiry into Callimachus' ΠΡΟΣ ΠΡΑΞΙΦΑΝΗΝ," *CQ*, 40 (1946), 11–26.

Pfeiffer claims that Apollonius' name cannot be added to the fragmentary list of Telchines (*Callimachus*, Vol. 1, 3, line 11), but see Herter, *Bericht* 1, 110–11.

Together with Callimachus' lost poem against an unnamed enemy, there exists a poem against Callimachus, attributed to Apollonius (*A.P.* 11.275 = 7.42), though few believe actually he wrote it. Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff suggested that the poem was a rhetorical exercise of late antiquity to recreate what Apollonius said when he left for Rhodes (*Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos* [Dublin, 1924], Vol. 2, 95–96). See Pfeiffer, *Testimonia* 25, and P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria* (Oxford, 1972), Vol. 2, 1056, n. 276; for those who do believe in Apollonius' authorship, see Herter, *Bericht* 2, 224.

[7] Hartmut Erbse, "Homerscholien und hellenistische Glossare bei Apollonios Rhodios," *Hermes*, 81 (1953), 195–96; Theodore M. Klein, "The Role of Callimachus in the Development of the Concept of the Counter-Genre," *Latomus*, 33 (1974), 217–31; Lefkowitz, "The Quarrel," 1–19; A. W. Bulloch, "Hellenistic Poetry," in P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox, eds., *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, Vol. 1, Part 4: *The Hellenistic Period and the Empire* (Cambridge, 1985), 46–47; G. O. Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry* (Oxford, 1988), 86–89. Herter suggests that Callimachus objected to the *Argonautica* for being both long and continuous (*Bericht* 1, 112). Herter's idea has been accepted by Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 143–44; Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, 730; C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry*, Vol. 1: *Prolegomena to the Literary Epistles* (Cambridge, 1963), 74, n. 1; Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1, 755.

Vian rejects the evidence for the quarrel, but is reluctant to give up belief in its existence: «Cependant, si l'on veut éviter de tomber dans l'hypercritique, il convient de prendre en considération pour l'histoire de la querelle l'existence de l'*Ibis* ....» (*Argonautiques I*, xvi).

[8] J. W. Mackail attributes Apollonius' decision to youthful impetuosity (*Lectures on Greek Poetry*, 2d ed. [London, 1911], 241–42). To be sure, epic poetry continued to be produced despite Callimachus, as shown by Konrat Ziegler, *Das Hellenistische Epos, ein vergessenes Kapitel griechischer Dichtung* (Leipzig, 1934); for a critique of these epic poems, see Peter Bing, *The Well-Read Muse: Present and Past in Callimachus and the Hellenistic Poets* (Göttingen, 1988), 50–55.

a role in the *Argonautica* as he did in literary Alexandria. Apollonius adopts Callimachus' voice to narrate the one kind of poem a Callimachean poet would never touch.

The *Argonautica* was long criticized as a failed epic poem, with a hero who inspired little interest and an exploit that inspired no satisfaction.[9] In the last thirty years, however, scholars have re-read the poem with new eyes and expectations. Gilbert Lawall was the first to recognize that Apollonius intentionally made Jason anti-heroic.[10] Charles Beye extended Lawall's interpretation by showing that the *Argonautica* is an anti-epic, into which the non-heroic Jason fits comfortably as the central figure.[11] I have put the interpretations of Lawall and Beye into the context of literary Alexandria. The anti-hero is a Callimachean hero; an anti-epic is a Callimachean epic.

I have set out to explore the *Argonautica* as a self-conscious, self-referential artifact representing Alexandrian literary values and the conflicts within them. My approach belongs in general to "the reader-response" school of criticism as represented by Wayne Booth and Wolfgang Iser.[12] Instead of using art to conceal art, some writers, called self-conscious, create an illusion of reality by emphasizing the artificiality of form: their characters know they are in a fictional world.[13]

Apollonius is concerned with breaking the barriers that divide characters, reader, and narrator from one another. Although he was in many ways an innovative poet, early Greek literature offers many examples of characters who interact with the audience. Even in Homer, the audience receives the occasional nod. In the *Odyssey*, Athena assures Telemachus that if he searches for his father he will be the subject of song for later generations (*Od.* 1.302). When she makes this promise, Homer's audience is about to hear the song about Telemachus' search for his father. Homer's listeners are put in the double position of witnessing both the promise and its fulfillment. They hear Athena's promise to Telemachus, which takes place in the story; they know she speaks the truth because they are listening to Homer generations later.

---

[9] Egon Eichgrün's dissertation gives a useful exegesis of what a reader expects—and fails—to find in the *Argonautica* ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," [Diss., Berlin, 1961]).

[10] Gilbert Lawall, "Apollonius' *Argonautica*: Jason as Anti-Hero," *YCS*, 19 (1966), 119–69.

[11] Charles R. Beye, "Jason as Love-hero in Apollonios' *Argonautika*," *GRBS*, 10 (1969), 31–55.

[12] Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1961); Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (London, 1974).

[13] Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London, 1984), 1–19.

Athena has an overly acute sense of the future if she alludes to his travels as encapsulated in the *Telemachia*, the first four books of the *Odyssey*.[14] In broader comedy, Aristophanes' characters display their knowledge more openly. When Dicaeopolis runs away from the enraged charcoal burners, he calls the group a "chorus," thus pointing to a dramatic convention, of which, being a character, he should be ignorant (*Ach.* 416).[15] In a more radical attack on fictional credibility, a character tries to break out from the *Thesmophoriazusae* into another play. Euripides' kinsman urges the other characters, the chorus, and the audience to believe the program has been changed, that *Helen* or *Andromeda* is now the play being enacted on the stage. In theater, the fourth wall between the actors and audience can be broken. When the poet's voice is transformed into writing, the game gets more complex.

Language has always been regarded as distorting reality as much as reflecting it.[16] Possibilities for deception are increased within a book because reader and writer agree to pretend that letters represent words. The first time writing is mentioned in Western literature, letters convey a deception.[17] "Baneful symbols [i.e., letters]" ask a king to kill Bellerophon (*Il.* 6.168–69), the bearer of the message. Writing widened the gap between word and deed, *logos* and *ergon*, speech and action, appearance and reality, falsehood and truth.[18] Apollonius separates

---

[14] Helen, another daughter of Zeus, seems almost aware of the audience's existence when she tells Hector that the gods have imposed sufferings on the Trojans so that they might be a subject of song in ages to come (*Il.* 6.357–58).

[15] For Aristophanes' enjoyment of fictionality in this play, see Froma Zeitlin, "Travesties of Gender and Genre in Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*," in *Reflections of Women in Antiquity*, ed. H. Foley (London, 1982); Joseph A. Dane, "Aristophanic Parody: *Thesmophoriazusae* and the Three-Actor Rule," *Theater Journal* (1984), 75–84; see also F. Muecke, "Playing with the Play: Theatrical Self-Consciousness in Aristophanes," *Antichthon*, 11 (1977), 52–67, and her "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman," *CQ*, 32 (1982), 41–55; Kenneth Reckford, *Aristophanes' Old-and-New Comedy* (Chapel Hill, 1987), 207–10.

[16] According to Pietro Pucci, when the Muses tell Hesiod that they can tell the truth or they can tell lies that look like truth (*Theog.* 27–28), they allude to the deceptive nature of language (*Hesiod and the Language of Poetry* [Baltimore, 1977], 15–16). Democritus had four proofs that words did not reflect reality (frag. 26; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 2: *The Presocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus* [Cambridge, 1965], 475).

[17] Segal, "Greek Tragedy: Writing, Truth, and the Representation of the Self," in *Mnemai: Classical Studies in Memory of Karl K. Hulley*, ed. Harold D. Evjen (Chico, 1984), 41–67. He goes on (52–58) to show a similar prejudice against writing in written productions (Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 946–49; Euripides, *Iph. Aul.* 98–105; Herodotus 1.125, 3.128; Thucydides 1.133). For debate about Homer's knowledge of writing, see Rufus Bellamy, "Bellerophon's Tablet," *CJ*, 84 (1989), 289–307; Barry P. Powell, *Homer and the Origin of the Greek Alphabet* (Cambridge, 1989); and David Shive, *Naming Achilles* (Oxford, 1987).

[18] Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 1: *The Earlier Presocratics and Pythagoreans* (Cambridge, 1962), 420, citing Sophocles *El.* 59; Herodotus 4.8.2;

deeds from words as reality from representation. He places the actual events inside the world of the poem, as the characters' experiences and actions. Representation he sets in the realm of the narrator. Inside the poem, characters see and interpret their world differently from the way it is presented by the narrator. His words do not fit their deeds.[19]

In his ironic treatment of his own story, Apollonius follows a path laid down by others. Although Plato is a writer, he disparages books (*Phaedrus* 274c–276a). They destroy memory and, if their ideas are challenged, they cannot speak to defend themselves. Yet, as a writer, Plato depends on books and readers for his continued existence, and he seems acutely aware of this in the *Apology*. There, the reader is far superior to the people actually present at Socrates' trial. Socrates addresses both a living audience that will condemn him to death and the readers of the future who will condemn the condemners (*Ap*. 38c). Theoretically, Socrates argues his case to save his life; in reality, he fights for his philosophy. To the audience of the flesh, he refuses to display his weeping children (*Ap*. 34b–d); to the audience of the spirit, the disembodied readers, he offers his spiritual children, his students (*Ap*. 33d–34a). Plato's Socrates sees far beyond his immediate audience to the readers of the future. Yet, despite this clear dependence on the written word and his future readers for Socrates' vindication, Plato rejects writing as a form of communication in contrast to dialectic. Apollonius goes further in this, by introducing characters whose only purpose is to disparage the poem (Chapter 5).[20]

Words on a page pretend to be the voice of someone speaking to an audience. The words are the same no matter who is reading them. Plato's Socrates protests against this pretense of conversation in texts (*Phaedrus* 275 d–e). As well as the words, the text contains an implied speaker along with an implied listener. These characters may differ significantly from the person writing the book and the person actually reading it. Ancient writers urged the reader to distinguish between the poet as a human being and the poet as revealed by poetry—in modern

---

Democritus frag. 82; Anaxagoras frag. 7; Adam Parry, *Logos and Ergon in Thucydides* (Salem, 1981), 47–51. Thucydides takes the idea one step further when he distinguishes between the true meanings of words and the distorted meanings assigned them during the civil strife in Corcyra (3.82.4). For the irony inherent in writing, see Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg, *The Nature of Narrative* (Oxford, 1966), 52–56.

[19] Massimo Fusillo, *Il Tempo delle Argonautiche: Un Analisi del raconto in Apollonio Rodio* (Rome, 1985), 347, 363–64; Barbara Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition* (Ithaca, 1990), 33, suggests that Apollonius reduces the reliability of the narrator in order to reflect the demise of the heroic world.

[20] Self-disparagement is the first meaning of irony (Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 2.7.12). Much later, Horace will mock his own claims to poetic excellence. See S. J. Harrison, "Deflating the *Odes*: Horace, *Epistles* 1.20," *CQ*, 38 (1988), 473–76.

parlance, between the "author" and the "narrator" (Catullus 16; Ovid, *Tristia* 2.354; and Martial 1.4.8).[21] In discussing the *Argonautica*, I will distinguish between Apollonius the poet and his Callimachean narrator, to whom he has assigned the incongruous task of writing an epic poem. The narrator reveals his literary adherence by praising Callimachus or by subverting the genre of epic poetry. The adoption of the Callimachean *persona* enabled Apollonius to experiment with literature as form. What happens when a Homeric epic is narrated in a Callimachean voice?

Apollonius wears the mask of the Callimachean poet as that mask would be constructed by Callimachus' enemies. Harold Bloom says that a poet will misrepresent the great poets of the past as a defense against being dominated by them:

> Poetic Influence—when it involves two strong, authentic poets,—always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misrepresentation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main tradition of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism without which modern poetry could not exist.[22]

Bloom's theory works well for Apollonius, who misrepresents both Homer and Callimachus through malicious over-simplification. His narrator, who avows Callimachean aesthetics, is presented as a pedant (below, pp. 74–78), implacably hostile to Homer (below, pp. 86–90) and determined to write a love story (below, pp. 34–35). This is not to say that Apollonius himself disparaged Homer or believed Callimachus did. For all its repetitions (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.4), the oral style is capable of great subtlety in characterization.[23] Mockery of Homer emanates from Apollonius' narrator, not from Apollonius himself.

---

[21] A. W. Allen, "Sunt qui Propertium Malint," in *Critical Essays on Roman Literature*, Vol. 1: *Elegy and Lyric*, ed. John P. Sullivan (Cambridge, 1962), 107–48. For a full length study of ironic narrative in an ancient author, see John J. Winkler, *Auctor and Actor: A Narratological Reading of Apuleius's The Golden Ass* (Berkeley, 1985).

[22] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York, 1973), 30.

[23] Charles R. Beye has examined the subtle characterizations of Menelaus and Helen when they tell Telemachus about his father (*The Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Epic Tradition*, 2d ed. [New York, 1966], 173–74); P. W. Harsh has suggested Penelope secretly recognizes Odysseus ("Penelope and Odysseus in *Odyssey* XIX," *AJP*, 71 [1950], 1–21). Homer's formulaic style was appropriate both for the poet, who composed rapidly, and for his audience, as Milman Parry showed. See discussion and bibliography of Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London, 1982), 20–30). For ancient criticism of Homer, see R. R. Schlunk, *The Homeric Scholia and the Aeneid: A Study of the Influence of Ancient Homeric Literary Criticism on Virgil* (Ann Arbor, 1974); Marchinus van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad*, 2 vols (Leiden, 1963–64), and his *Textual Criticism of the Odyssey* (Leiden, 1949).

In a general way, Callimachus' influence pervades the *Argonautica* with its interest in geography, mythology, and philology.[24] The narrator pays homage to Callimachus through echoes, allusions, and especially through many etiological stories, *aitia*. Callimachus collected *aitia* into his most famous book, the *Aitia*. The narrator of the *Argonautica* makes us think of Callimachus every time he interrupts the story to remark that an episode—often unremarkable—gave rise to a ritual, a custom, or a name still existing in his own age. These etiological stories are called a "betrayal" of epic, because they reduce the heroic past to dry issues of scholarship.[25] When characters in Homer look ahead to what people will say in future generations, they increase the story's magnitude. They know posterity will care about Troy. The scholar, on the other hand, looks at the epic world through a microscope and draws out information. In the *Argonautica* the many *aitia* specifically establish the narrator's credentials. He is a follower of Callimachus.

The *Argonautica* is a heroic tale told in the wrong voice, an epic story changed to an allegory of poetic theory. There is no doubt that Jason will win the Golden Fleece. The suspense of the story lies in its telling. Can a Callimachean narrator triumph over the genre of epic poetry? The story itself is epic: how Jason won the Golden Fleece, the prize of heroism and symbol of glory. The Argonauts' expedition occurred a generation before the Trojan War, and two heroes of that war, Achilles and Ajax, were the sons of Argonauts. Apollonius recreates Homer both in language and manner.[26] The Homeric meter, formulae, and adornments remind the reader that the poem is in the Homeric tradition. But the Callimachean narrator makes the epic devices absurd

---

[24] André Hurst, *Apollonios de Rhodes: manière et cohérence*, Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana, Vol. 8 (Geneva, 1967), 20–35; Fusillo, *Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 17; Erbse, "Homerscholien," 195–96; Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1, 626–40; Vian, *Argonautiques I*, xix–xx. Theodore Klein points out that Apollonius incorporates elegiac material in epic form ("Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius and the Concept of the Big Book," *Eranos*, 73 [1975], 24–25); and that Apollonius balances epic and anti-epic themes ("Apollonius' Jason: Hero and Scoundrel," *QUCC*, 13 [1983], 123–25).

[25] Klein, "The Role of Callimachus," 217–31; Fusillo, *Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 136–42; Hutchinson observes that the *aitia* distance the reader from the story (*Hellenistic Poetry*, 93). The *aitia* in the *Argonautica* have been categorized by Fusillo (*Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 116–36); and T. M. Paskiewicz, "*Aetia* in the Second Book of Apollonius' *Argonautica*," *ICS*, 13 (1988), 57–61.

[26] John F. Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius and the Homeric Epic," *YCS*, 13 (1952), 33–143; Malcolm Campbell, *Echoes and Imitations of Early Epic in Apollonius Rhodius* (Leiden, 1981); G. Giangrande, "The Utilization of Homeric Variants by Apollonius Rhodius: A Methodological Canon of Research," *QUCC*, 15 (1973), 73–81, and his *Zu Sprachgebrauch, Technik und Text des Apollonios Rhodios*, Classical and Byzantine Monographs (Amsterdam, 1973); Hunter, *Book III*, index under Homer.

by applying Homeric forms to non-heroic people.

The issue of the literary quarrel is sustained throughout the *Argonautica* as the narrator, heroes, and reader join in the debate over epic poetry. Apollonius breaks narrative apart by inserting the literary controversy of third-century Alexandria into the tissues of his poem. The poem is shaped and animated by the internal tension between the opposed literary positions. Underlying Jason's story is a struggle between Homeric tradition and Callimachean poetics—a struggle treated with exquisite irony and humor. The narrator is in conflict with his poem.

In the Hellenistic Age the form of a book was nearly as important as its content (Chapter 2). A product of his age, Apollonius keeps the reader aware of the poem as a book. He is not interested in creating a seamless narrative, but in making the reader witness the transformation of a performed epic poem to a written one. In a performance, the poet can guide the audience's response to what is said by tone of voice and gestures. In a book, the poet's voice is inextricably bound to what is said by the words on the page. Apollonius manages to create a distinction between the singer and the song. Whatever his personal opinions about poetry may have been, he adopts the Callimachean voice because it was raised so emphatically against epic poetry. Apollonius creates a tension in his poem by narrating a Homeric poem in a Callimachean manner. The Homeric performer could create the illusion in the audience of being present at the action inside the poem. The writer who makes the reader aware of the reading process can be equally deceptive.

The *Argonautica* opens with the narrator and heroes united in honoring Apollo (Chapter 3). The unity, however, is specious because the two parties are worshipping two different gods under the same name. Apollo, whose oracle to Pelias sets the epic poem in motion, is also the god Callimachus claimed for his anti-epic poetry. The parallels between the narrator's prayer to Apollo and the heroes' sacrifice to him separate the two realms from each other, as the surface of the narrative is detached from its content. The narrator and heroes set out on the same journey, but they have antithetical goals.

The Argonauts yearn to take part in a Homeric poem, which the Callimachean narrator refuses to write (Chapter 4). Their opposing perspectives are brought into focus through the opposition of the heroic Heracles, chosen by the Argonauts as their leader, and the anti-heroic Jason imposed upon them by the narrator. Jason's character is formed in opposition to the Homeric hero Achilles, the model of aristocratic heroism from the dawn of Western literature. At the end of the classical period, Aristotle lists the qualities of the *megalopsychus*, "great-souled man," the term he uses to describe Achilles and Ajax (*Nic. Eth.* 4.3, *Analyt. Post.* 97b15). Since all these qualities are missing in Jason,

Aristotle's treatise offers a useful point of departure in discussing an anti-hero.[27]

First, a hero is competitive. He seeks the prize awarded to the best man for the noblest deed. He deserves this prize because of his courage and strength. Always willing to help others, he is reluctant to accept assistance and eager to repay favors as quickly as possible. The Golden Fleece is archetypal example of the prize sought by heroes, and its quest placed Jason among the great heroes of myth. The character of the man who won the Fleece is open to interpretation. Apollonius' Jason, based on the Euripidean model is no *megalopsychus*. He lacks the competitive spirit and is never moved by considerations of honor. Fearing to face Aeetes' fire-breathing bulls, he seeks the help of Medea, whom, when it proves convenient, he tries to betray (Chapters 7 and 8). Apollonius put "an ordinary man perversely in hero's clothing."[28] Likened to a god, dressed in divine apparel, Jason sleeps with the queen of one island and then kills the king of another. Yet, he lacks the internal qualities of a great hero. He leads the Argonauts, but he is not the best man. Heracles, the hero preferred by the characters inside the book, fits the Aristotelian definition of the *megalopsychus* because he is strong, brave, and proud. When he abandons the journey, his loss makes the poem, like its remaining hero, anti-heroic.

In the second book, the heroes, narrator, and readers are drawn together to discuss the poem (Chapter 5). Since the loss of Heracles has not yet ended the heroes' hope for a heroic enterprise, the narrator sends them a prophet as his representative. In Homer, omens and prophecies motivate events; in the *Argonautica*, these interventions also indicate the narrator's allegiance to Callimachean principles. The prophet Phineus in Book 2 (like the talking crow of Book 3) echoes Callimachus as he guides the heroes away from heroic action and into romance. Having set forth the opposing perspectives of heroes and narrator, Apollonius includes the response of the Alexandrian readership. Two representatives, Apollo and King Lycus, evaluate the poem for Callimachean and Telchinian readers. Despite their literary opposition, they unite in condemning the poem. To enter the magical world of the poem, the reader must imitate the poet and stand outside the controversy. If we persist in reading the poem, we are rewarded by meeting Medea, who initiates us into the perilous magic of reading.

Apollonius involves the reader in contemplating the reading pro-

---

[27] Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. 1: *Archaic Greece: The Mind of Athens*, trans. Gilbert Highet, 2d ed. (New York, 1965), 11–12.

[28] Beye, "Jason as Love-hero," 47; James Clauss, *The Best of the Argonauts: The Redefinition of the Epic Hero in Book 1 of Apollonius's Argonautica* (Berkeley, 1993), 24.

cess (Chapter 6). Readers in antiquity had to separate words from an unbroken sequence of letters, after which they combined these words to make sentences. In the *Argonautica*, both art and the observer's reaction to art are described by words of separation and combination. As we separate the levels of narrative, the heroes' from the narrator's, we create a three-dimensional space into which Medea can grow.

Halfway through the poem, its major character enters, but the hero is a heroine, and her story is a romance (Chapter 7). Although Medea's presence serves the purposes of the Callimachean narrator, she transcends literary politics. Her failure to repress passion results in victory for the Callimachean side, as love, traditionally the foil of epic, becomes the mainspring of the *Argonautica*. In this poem, heroic deeds offer only comic relief from the seriousness of romantic love. Bewitched by Medea, the reader affirms the literary seriousness of a love story over the battles of epic heroes.

Book 4 shows the final triumph of the narrator over his poem when Medea brings down the bronze giant Talos, a symbol of epic poetry (Chapter 8). Literary victory, however, has a price. The narrator, who uses Medea to win his battle, is terrified by her at the close of the poem. When her vision has cleared and she finally sees Jason for what he really is, she becomes even more powerful. The hatred that she unleashes on Talos penetrates the realm of the narrator.

The poet is not the narrator and does not share the narrator's literary goals (Chapter 9). His goal is to deceive the mind of the reader. The works of art described in the poem teach the reader how to be deceived. The invisible membrane separating the spectator from the art then dissolves leaving us face to face with one of the most powerful and terrifying characters of all literature, Medea.

It is the premise of this book that the *Argonautica* alludes to passages of Callimachus that are considered late in Callimachus' career. These passages, which set out Callimachus' literary theory, are used to establish the narrator of the *Argonautica* as a Callimachean poet. In the fluid chronology of Alexandrian literature, Apollonius' creative life can be dated almost anywhere in the third century.[29] The *Argonautica*,

---

[29] Little is known about Apollonius, and from sources both late and incoherent: two biographies passed down with manuscripts of the *Argonautica* (Laurentianus XXXII 9, Guelferbytanus and Parisinus 2727); a notice in the *Suda* (Apollonios 3419 Adler); and a papyrus fragment of the 2d century A.D.: P.OXY 1241, published with commentary by Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part 10 (Oxford, 1914). The biographies, the notice of the *Suda*, and the papyrus fragment are collected by Carl Wendel, *Scholia in Apollonium Vetera* (Berlin, 1935), 1–2, and (in translation) by Hunter, *Book III*, 1–3, who analyses their content, 1–9. For discussion of the biographies, see Hans Herter, "Zur Lebensgeschichte des Apollonios von Rhodos,"

undated itself, cannot be securely set in a time frame with the works of Theocritus and Callimachus.

Both Apollonius and Theocritus recount the stories of Hylas' rape by a water nymph and Polydeuces' boxing match with Amycus. One poet clearly alludes to the other, but no external evidence reveals whose version came first. If Theocritus was the borrower, the *Argonautica* must have been written before 260, the date scholars have assigned to the end of Theocritus' Alexandrian period.[30] Debate over the relative chronology of Theocritus and Apollonius goes back to the last century.[31] Wilamowitz suggested that Theocritus wrote *Idylls* 13 and 22 as a pointed correction of Apollonius' continuous narrative.[32] Theocritus' versions of the two stories are found in separate poems and even in poems of different genres. The story of Hylas occurs in a letter of advice (*Id.* 13), the boxing match in a hymn to Castor and Polydeuces (*Id.* 22). In this way, Wilamowitz argued, Theocritus shows his allegiance to Callimachus against Apollonius. The interpretation is attractive because it connects the two poems in a meaningful way. The idea, however, that Theocritus is correcting Apollonius presumes the exist-

---

RM, 91 (1942), 310–26; and P. Händel, "Die zwei Versionen der Viten des Apollonios Rhodios," *Hermes*, 90 (1962), 429–43.

The biographies are vague about the important question of when the *Argonautica* was written. They support the positions of both those who date the poem to Apollonius' youth and those who date it to his old age. The *Suda* puts his presidency of the Library out of sequence, perhaps because the writer confused Apollonius with Apollonius the Eidograph. The papyrus fragment makes Apollonius the tutor of the wrong Ptolemy.

The date of Apollonius' birth, even the approximate date, is unknown. Egon V. Eichgrün sets it at the end of the fourth century ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 32); Herter, in the first decade of the third century ("Apollonios der Epiker," 15;); Vian, around 295 or 265 (*Argonautiques* I, x).

[30] A. S. F. Gow, *Theocritus* (Cambridge, 1950), Vol. 1, xxix, Vol. 2, 591; Hutchinson believes that he left soon after 265 (*Hellenistic Poetry*, 5).

[31] For bibliography of earlier scholarship, see Herter, *Bericht* 2, 352–59, and "Apollonios der Epiker," 20–22. Two treatises have not resolved the issue. A. Köhnken, *Apollonios und Theokrit. Die Hylas- und die Amykosgeschichten beider Dichter und die Frage der Priorität*, Hypomnemata 12 (Göttingen, 1964), argues for Theocritus' priority; Hermann Fuchs, "Die Hylasgeschichte bei Apollonios Rhodios und Theokrit," Diss., Würzburg, 1969, for Apollonius'.

[32] Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Die Textgeschichte der griechischen Bukoliker* (Berlin, 1906), 178 (first published by G. Knaack, "Zu den *Aitien* des Kallimachos," *Hermes*, 23 [1888], 136–37). The most enthusiastic supporters of Wilamowitz's suggestion have been T. B. L. Webster, "Chronological Problems in Early Alexandrian Poetry," *WS*, 76 (1963), 68–78, and Brooks Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford, 1963), 398–405. Webster and Otis have also argued that Apollonius, not Theocritus, had a reason to tie the story of Hylas to the Argonauts' expedition ("Chronological Problems," 76; Otis, *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry*, 399; cf. Fuchs, "Die Hylasgeschichte," 31 and 34). Kenneth J. Dover, *Theocritus: Select Poems* (London, 1971), 180–81, lists the allusions to the story of Hylas that occurred, or may have occurred, in pre-Alexandrian literature, of which the most secure seems to have been the epic *Heracleia* by Cinaethon (7th or 6th century B.C.).

ence of a quarrel between Apollonius and Callimachus. In fact, it is the strongest argument for the quarrel's having taken place. Moreover, if Theocritus makes a point of treating adjacent episodes in separate poems, why does he choose episodes already separated by a book division? Presumably, the *Argonautica* was published on four separate rolls of papyrus, each one containing a single book.[33] The effort of re-rolling one papyrus roll and opening the next would take more than enough time to make the two stories distinct. Theocritus' "correction" would then be superfluous.[34]

---

[33] See below, chap. 5, n. 2.

[34] Recently, three distinguished scholars have argued for Apollonius' priority to Theocritus. Bulloch has revived the idea of Theocritus' literary partisanship, and suggests that Theocritus wished to show "how a poet writing in a more 'refined' and 'limited' style might approach traditional epic themes" ("Hellenistic Poetry," 41). He does not make it clear how Theocritus achieves that purpose. Hutchinson, who agrees with Bulloch in setting Apollonius before Theocritus, disputes his argument, that Theocritus accepted Callimachus' poetic program (*Hellenistic Poetry*, 197–203). Instead, he argues for Apollonius' priority on other grounds. Apollonius, not Theocritus, had a reason for connecting Hylas with the Argonauts (192; following the lead of Webster and Otis, above n. 32). Although he argues that Theocritus did not seek out obscure stories like the story of Hylas, Hutchinson concedes Theocritus found an obscure myth for *Idyll* 7 (192–93).

As a further indication of Apollonius' priority, Hutchinson argues that Theocritus transformed Heracles into the lover of Hylas (ibid., 193–94). Most scholars now agree, however, that the homoerotic element was present in Apollonius' version (below, pp. 62–65). Theocritus wrote his version after Apollonius, he would be making explicit what Apollonius had made implicit—not the action of a creative poet. On the other hand, the reader familiar with Theocritus' version would pick up Apollonius' allusions to the erotic relationship.

Bulloch claims that the *Argonautica* was published between the publications of the first two books of the *Aitia* and the last two ("Callimachus' *Erysichthon*, Homer, and Apollonius Rhodius," *AJP*, 98 [1977], 116–23). He argues that Apollonius adopted a linguistic peculiarity from Callimachus (dative with κυρέω, *H.* 6.37) and then used it elsewhere "rather derivatively" (at 2.363, 4.945); or again, Callimachus borrowed a metrical peculiarity found several times in Apollonius (2.444–45, 2.1203, 4.1554), but only once in his own work (*H.* 5.103–4). Hutchinson criticizes Bulloch's method in the latter instance by pointing out that four times as many hexameters of Apollonius have survived (*Hellenistic Poetry*, 88, n. 6).

Malcolm Campbell argues for Apollonius' priority because he uses the adjective ὑπερφίαλος, "arrogant," three times to describe Amycus and his Bebrycians (2.54, 129, 158)—which he thinks was mocked by Theocritus (*Id.* 22.97; "Three Notes on Alexandrine Poetry," *Hermes*, 102 [1974], 40–41); but, as Richard L. Hunter points out, the word also describes Aeetes (3.15), who, with Heracles and Amycus, belongs to the anti-Jasonian part of the poem (*The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies* [Cambridge, 1993], 23). Campbell adduces further parallels between the two poets ("Theocritus Thirteen," in *Owls to Athens: Essays on Classical Subjects Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover*, ed. E. M. Clark [Oxford, 1990], 113–19). Theocritus likens Hylas' fall to that of a star, which reminds sailors that it is time to set forth (*Id.* 13.49–52). In the *Argonautica*, the appearance of the morning star and a breeze alerts Tiphys that it is time to go (1.1273–75). Campbell argues that Theocritus must have been drawing on Apollonius' account here to make his simile (116), but the morning star and breeze seem rather ordinary elements in a voyage. If Apollonius was the borrower, these

If the *Argonautica* took its final form after Theocritus left Alexandria in 260, it could also have followed Callimachus' passages on poetic theory, which are dated c. 246 B.C.[35] Most agree that Apollonius was in general more likely to have quoted Callimachus than to have been quoted by him.[36] The story that Apollonius was Callimachus' student seems to mean that he acknowledged Callimachus' literary influence.[37] Even if the relationship is fictional, this fiction indicates that Callimachus was thought to be a generation older than Apollonius.

The absence of Apollonius' name from a list of Callimachus' enemies (above, n. 6) suggests that the *Argonautica* was written after the

---

elements are more striking because of their allusion to Hylas' rape. Campbell also finds significant the similarity of sound Ἡρακλέην ἥρωες λιποναύταν, "the heroes blamed Heracles as a deserter" (*Id.* 13.74) and κάλλιπον ἥρω/ Ἡρακλέην, "they left behind the hero Heracles" (2.766–67). In the latter passage, Jason is telling the Argonauts' adventures to their royal host. Again, a line that seems commonplace in Apollonius takes on additional meaning through allusion to Theocritus' earlier version. In the scene with Lycus he tells the story in the way most favorable to himself (below, pp. 83–84). The echo indicates how Jason shapes Heracles' departure into a desertion.

However much Bulloch, Hutchinson, and Campbell have increased our awareness of Alexandrian subtleties, they are far from proving Apollonius' priority. Bulloch concedes that he has found indications for chronology, rather than proof ("Callimachus' *Erysichthon*, 118). Hutchinson implies an uncertainty by suggesting that Apollonius echoes Callimachus' fourth book of the *Aitia* (88, n. 5) and *Hymn to Apollo* (89–90), even though both works are considered late in Callimachus' career (246 B.C.) and certainly much later than Theocritus, who is thought to have left Alexandria some fourteen years before (above, p. 12).

[35] The programmatic poems of Callimachus are dated late in his career, to the reign of Ptolemy III Euergetes, whose reign began in 246. Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* is dated by a scholiast, who identifies the king mentioned in line 26 as Euergetes. According to F. Williams, editor of the *Hymn*, a scholar transmitted a guess as a fact (*Callimachus: Hymn to Apollo* [Oxford, 1978], *ad loc.*). Still, he concedes (2), the scholar was right, if for the wrong reasons, and most accept the date of 246. Claude Meillier suggests a much earlier date, around 280 (*Callimaque et son temps. Recherches sur la carrière et la condition d'un écrivain à l'époque des premiers Lagides*, Publications de l'université de Lille, 3 [Lille, 1979], 101).

The two mentions of Queen Berenice II in the *Aitia* date its final publication after Euergetes ascended the throne in 246 (P. J. Parsons, "Callimachus: Victoria Berenices," *ZPE*, 25 [1977], 1–50). Callimachus says he is an old man in the Prologue (*Ait.* frag. 1.33–38), but for the danger of believing what poets say about themselves, see Allen, "Sunt qui Propertium Malint," passim. It is generally agreed, however tentatively, that the Prologue was written c. 246: Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1, 652; Hunter, *Book III*, 8.

[36] Wilamowitz declared, „Die Argonautika zeigen auf Schritt und Tritt Nachahmung von Aitia und Hekale: das ist notorisch und braucht nicht belegt zu werden" (*Hellenistische Dichtung*, Vol. 2, 167). For discussion, see Herter, *Bericht* 2, 232–35, and his "Apollonios der Epiker," 20. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, Vol. 2, xli–xlii, lists the lines of the *Argonautica* that echo the *Aitia*: *Arg.* 1.1309 (with variations at *Arg.* 4.1216 and 4.1716) = *Ait.* 12.6; *Arg.* 1.418–19 and 4.1704–5 echo *Ait.* 18.6–7; the correspondences are also discussed by Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1, 635–40.

[37] Lefkowitz, "The Quarrel," 14–15.

Prologue to the *Aitia*.[38] The scholar (above, n. 6) who identified the men disagreeing with Callimachus on trivial topics must have believed that he would have quarreled with the writer of an epic poem. Since the publication of the *Argonautica* was the reason given for the quarrel with Apollonius, then he must have had reason to believe the *Argonautica* was published after the *Aitia*.[39] Finally, if, as many believe, Apollonius alludes to works of Callimachus written around 246, the *Argonautica* must have been completed after that date.[40]

Recitations, continuous revisions, and new editions were part of the poetic process in Alexandria. According to the biographies, Apollonius gave a public reading of the *Argonautica* and revised his poem considerably.[41] He could have revised his poem over a period of years, perhaps even of twenty years. Callimachus and Apollonius lived in the same era and moved in the same intellectual circles. The Library, where they both worked, would have offered an easy exchange of ideas. Apollonius might well have listened to Callimachus' programmatic poems while he developed his own ideas. In such an environment, Theocritus and Callimachus could have alluded to an early version (i.e., before 260 B.C.) of the *Argonautica* and Apollonius could have later echoed their works in his final edition (after 246 B.C). Relative

---

[38] Händel, "Die zwei Versionen," 438–41.

[39] Allusions to the fourth book of the *Aitia* or to the *Hymn to Apollo* would date the *Argonautica* after 246. By calling the snake, which Apollo killed in Delphi, Delphynes (2.706), Apollonius alludes to a passage in Callimachus' fourth book of the *Aitia* (frag. 88), and he echoes Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* (at 3.392, H. Ap. 2.106). See Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung*, Vol. 2, 85; Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, Vol. 1, *ad loc.*; Williams, *Hymn to Apollo*, 82; Richard L. Hunter, "Apollo and the Argonauts: Two Notes on Ap. Rhod. 2.669–719," MH, 43 (1986), 57–60.

[40] Vian, *Argonautiques I*, xiii. Of Callimachus' other works, Bulloch suggests that *Hymn* 6 preceded the *Argonautica* and that *Hymn* 5 was later ("Callimachus' *Erysichthon*," 116–23). A. S. Hollis suggests that *Hecale* preceded the *Argonautica* (*Callimachus: Hecale* [Oxford, 1990], 26).

[41] The scholia pass down six passages in the first book that are said to have derived from the first edition of the poem, collected by Mooney, *Argonautica*, 403–11. Fränkel suggests that these passages represent adjustments Apollonius made in the text (*Noten zu den Argonautika des Apollonios* [Munich, 1968], 78–81, 629); Michael W. Haslam argues that the alternative readings passed down as part of the first edition, the "proekdosis," are too different from the version we have to be considered mere textual variants ("Apollonius Rhodius and the Papyri," ICS, 3 [1978], 61–65). For the idea that the alternative readings show that Apollonius was moving away from the Homeric voice, see M. Fantuzzi, *Richerche su Apollonio Rodio: Diacronie della dizione epica* (Roma, 1988), section 4.

Callimachus' *Aitia* in whole or in part probably circulated before the sections dealing with Berenice were added. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1, 720; Campbell, "Three Notes," 41; Hollis, "The Composition of Callimachus' *Aitia* in the Light of P.OXY 2258," CQ, 36 (1986), 467–71; Parsons, "Victoria Berenices," 46–49; Bulloch, "Hellenistic Poetry," 15–16; Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry*, 40.

chronology becomes less important, given the progressive nature of poetic composition in Alexandria.

In the absence of chronology, the only way to distinguish the original from the echo is to discern a literary purpose for making the allusion. Apollonius draws on the poems Callimachus wrote about poetry to create an easily recognizable voice for the narrator of his poem. In general, the scholarly tone and scholarly interests put the poet in the Alexandrian era. Etiologies and other allusions to Callimachus give the poet's voice a more specific identity. The Callimachean voice is more readily distinctive because of its incongruity with Homeric meter, phrases, and devices.

The distinction is also implicitly aural. The Homeric poet sang to the accompaniment of a phorminx, later called the cithara, a heavy, highly ornamented instrument with a loud sound.[42] The voice of the poet was deep. Aristotle praises the deep voice of the *megalopsychus* (*Nic. Eth.* 4.3.34), which he believes is an indication of nobility as well as masculinity (Aristotle, *Gen. An.* 787b6–788a16; *Hist. An.* 545a1–17). Antipater of Thessalonica, a poet hostile to Callimachus, praises Homer as a "manly" poet (*A. P.* 11.20), with the implication that Callimachus and his followers are effeminate. The high voice was considered inappropriate for manly roles. Sophocles was prevented from playing the hero in his own tragedies because he had a small voice, and so he played the maiden Nausicaa (*Life* 4; Athenaeus 20e).[43] According to Aristophanes, Agathon's womanly voice enabled him to impersonate a woman when he composed women's speeches for his tragedy (*Thesm.* 146–52, 192). In the *Argonautica*, the narrator's voice does not does not fit the theme because, implicitly, it is high-pitched.

The incongruity of mixing male and female verses and tunes was condemned by Plato (*Laws* 669c3–6). Incongruity, however, lies at the

---

[42] Martha Maas and Jane McIntyre Snyder, *Stringed Instruments of Ancient Greece* (New Haven, 1989), 53–70, 202.

[43] For more examples, see Muecke, "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman," 54, n. 93; cf. Stephen Halliwell, "The Sounds of the Voice in Old Comedy," in *Owls to Athens: Essays on Classical Subjects Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover*, ed. E. M. Clark (Oxford, 1990), 76. According to David Sider, Euripides is mocked in the *Frogs*, for losing his deep tragic baritone in a competition with Aeschylus, who, when he caps the opening lines of Euripides' tragedies, mocks his manhood, by saying in a high-pitched voice, "[he] lost his bottle of oil" ("Ληκύθιον ἀπώλεσεν: Aristophanes' Limp Phallic Joke?" *Mnemosyne*, 45 [1992], 359–64). Lucian describes a similar incongruity in his portrait of the actor, who can get away with Andromache or Hecuba, but who makes himself ridiculous when he plays the role of Heracles (*The Dance*, 27).

Horace makes a similar joke in his definitive specimen of the Roman *recusatio* (*Od.* 1.6). Claiming an inability to praise the heroes of his time, Horace compresses into two words the mis-combination of poet and theme: *tenues grandia*, "[I] delicate—[the themes] big" (9).

heart of much powerful writing—for example, the perpetual revels of the Furies in the house of Atreus (Aeschylus, *Ag.* 1188–90).[44] The demons are intoxicated with blood, not wine. Their revels are ghastly, not joyous. The revellers are female, not male.

The poet at odds with his material might seem to be a modern concept, but the poem written out below exhibits a pattern very similar to the *Argonautica*. In this poem, which is called the first example of the *recusatio*, or refusal to write epic, a poet tries to sing an epic poem, but cannot:[45]

> θέλω λέγειν Ἀτρείδας,
> θέλω δὲ Κάδμον ᾄδειν·
> ἡ βάρβιτος δὲ χορδαῖς
> Ἔρωτα μοῦνον ἠχεῖ.
> Ἤμειψα νεῦρα πρώην
> καὶ τὴν λύρην ἅπασαν,
> κἀγὼ μὲν ᾖδον ἄθλους
> Ἡρακλέους· λύρη δὲ
> ἔρωτας ἀντεφώνει.
> Χαίροιτε λοιπὸν ἡμῖν,
> ἥρωες· ἡ λύρη γὰρ
> μόνους Ἔρωτας ᾄδει.

> I want to tell of the sons of Atreus,
> I want to sing of Cadmus,
> but the lyre with its chords
> only sounds of love.
> I changed the strings recently
> and the whole lyre,
> and I tried to sing the deeds
> of Heracles, but the lyre
> responded with love poetry.
> Farewell forever,
> heroes; for my lyre
> only sings of love.

The poet wishes to sing epic, but his accompanying instrument, the *barbitos*, plays only drinking songs.[46] Apollonius too presents a poet at odds with the very process of poetry. On an instrument used for epic poetry the narrator struggles to impose a Callimachean song. Against the twanging hexameters he tells a love story, at the center of which, instead of a hero—or two heroes or fifty heroes—he places a woman.

---

[44] William Scott, *Musical Design in Aeschylean Theater* (Hanover, 1984), 17–19.

[45] *Anacreontea* 23 Bergk; R. G. M. Nisbet and Margaret Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book 1* (1970; rev. rpt., Oxford, 1975), 81.

[46] For the *barbitos*, see Maas and Snyder, *Stringed Instruments*, 113–28, 202.

CHAPTER TWO

APOLLONIUS, HOMER, AND CALLIMACHUS

Modern readers of oral and literary epics tend to overlook the contrast between watching a performance and reading. Since the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Argonautica* are transmitted as books, it is difficult to remember that the first two poems were intended for an audience. The loss of music from ancient drama is widely lamented, but the effect of writing on Homer has been ignored. Homer composed for a listening audience. Apollonius, like James Joyce and T. S. Eliot, wrote for re-readers. Even if we listen to contemporary poets reading their poetry, a single hearing does not suffice to draw out the nuances of their meaning. Marshall McLuhan showed the effect of writing on an oral culture; classical scholars have found a similar awareness existed in antiquity, particularly in the Alexandrian Age, where the book proved a fruitful subject for poetry.[1] Apollonius wrote about writing as well as about the Argonauts. His book is shaped against the contours of another form of poetry, Homer's winged words. Apollonius restores the theatrical element to a written work by opening a line of communication between himself and the reader. His poem centers on love's delusions; the Callimachean narrator forces a love story on an epic. Love, the breaker down of barriers, is the image he uses to define his relationship with his invisible reader (below, pp. 149–50).

The performance requires a bard, a crowd, and a big room. The book is best enjoyed in solitude. The performance is held in a fixed setting; the book can be read anywhere. Readers of books cannot therefore be lured into the story by reflections of themselves. In an oral recitation, the listener must be kept on the track, and the poet must be sensitive

---

[1] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (London, 1964), 81–88 and *passim*. Among classicists, the transition to writing has been stressed by Eric A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge, 1963) and his *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present* (New Haven, 1986); Charles Segal, "Greek Tragedy," 41–67; and Bing, *The Well-Read Muse*, 10–48. To be sure, oral composition can survive the invention of writing, as Ruth Finnegan emphasizes, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge, 1977), 160–68. Even when the book was well established, recitation was the normal form of publication, as Moses Hadas points out, *Ancilla to Classical Reading* (New York, 1954), 50–60. Indeed, Apollonius is said to have left Alexandria after his recitation of the *Argonautica* was severely criticized.

to the audience when setting the pace. There is no rewinding in a performance—an idea once lost is lost forever. Over the centuries, bards must have worked out a pace that would accommodate everyone in the audience. The simplicity and directness of the language were helped by the physical presence of the poet, whose meaning was underscored by gestures, tone, and facial expressions.[2] In books, readers supply the voice, eyes, and ears; language supplies the tone.[3]

Although the Greeks acquired an alphabet from the Phoenicians in the eighth century B.C., it was not until the end of the fifth century that the book supplanted the oral performance.[4] The Muses were depicted on fifth-century vases as holding book scrolls, but the poets still called themselves "singers," not writers.[5] Ancient literature underwent a change when oral composition yielded to written.[6] The contest between the oral mode and the written was openly discussed.[7] Jokes about book scrolls made at the end of the fifth century resemble those made about computers today.[8] A fifth-century philosopher made an analogy between the real world, made up of atoms, and the words denoting the real world, made up of letters.[9]

A generation apart, Herodotus and Thucydides illustrate the two forms of communication. Thucydides praises his own book as an "eternal possession" in contrast to the "performance piece" of Herodotus (1.22).[10] Certainly, no one could accuse Thucydides of seeking easy applause from a "live" audience. The difference between text and performance is revealed in the contrast between the convoluted knots of Thucydidean prose and the straightforward sentences of Herodotus.[11] The effort involved in circling around Thucydides' sentences to work out their meaning teaches the reader the task of the analytical

---

[2] Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, 1980), 34.

[3] Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge, 1977), 44.

[4] Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 49–52; Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 28–32; C. J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama. Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985), 3–40.

[5] Bing, *The Well-Read Muse*, 12, 15–17.

[6] Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Goody (Cambridge, 1962), 27–84; and Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 79–81, 167–68.

[7] Segal, "Greek Tragedy," 41–67.

[8] Kenneth Reckford, *Aristophanes' Old-and-New Comedy*, 404.

[9] Leucippus 67 A 9 (Diels-Kranz) = Aristotle, *De gen. et corr.* 1.315b6–15; Segal, "Greek Tragedy," 55.

[10] Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 53–54, n. 8; Virginia Hunter, *Past and Present in Herodotus and Thucydides* (Princeton, 1982), 324–25.

[11] Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 54, n. 8; Hunter, *Past and Present*, 227, 294–95.

historian.[12] Perhaps in ironic deference to the oral mode, Thucydides saves his most difficult language for speeches.[13]

In Alexandria, poets were obsessed with the form of the book. An object could have a double existence both as itself and as its description. In a fusion of form and meaning, a poem about an axe takes the form of an axe:

Ἀνδροθέᾳ δῶρον ὁ Φωκεὺς κρατερᾶς μηδοσύνας ἦρα τίνων Ἀθάνᾳ
τᾶμος, ἐπεὶ τὰν ἱερὰν κηρὶ πυρίπνῳ πόλιν ᾐθάλωσεν
οὐκ ἐνάριθμος γεγαὼς ἐν προμάχοις Ἀχαιῶν
νῦν ἐς Ὁμήρειον ἔβα κέλευθον
τρὶς μάκαρ ὃν σὺ θυμῷ
ὅδ' ὄλβος
ἀεὶ πνεῖ.
ἵλαος ἀμφιδερχθῇς.
σὰν χάριν, ἁγνὰ πολύβουλε Παλλάς
ἀλλ' ἀπὸ κρανᾶν ἰθαρᾶν νᾶμα κόμιζε δυσκλής·
Δαρδανιδᾶν, χρυσοβαφεῖς δ' ἐστυφέλιξ' ἐκ θεμέθλων ἄνακτας,
ὦπασ' Ἐπειὸς πέλεκυν, τῷ ποκα πύργων θεοτεύκτων κατέρειψεν αἶπος.

The man of Phocis gave to the man-goddess Athena, in return for her mighty counsel, at the time when he reduced to ash the sacred city with a fiery doom. Although he was not numbered in the vanguard of the Achaeans, he yet now has gone on the Homeric road. Thrice blessed he whom in your heart—this wealth ever breathes—you have looked upon with favor. Thanks to you Pallas the pure, the wise. The ignoble flow from shining fountains carried him; when he knocked the gold-embroidered lords from their foundations, Epeius gave the axe by which once the height of the god-built walls of the Trojans fell.

---

[12] Beye speculates that Thucydides' exile forced on him an awareness that he was writing for readers, not an audience (*Ancient Greek Literature and Society*, 220).

[13] Ibid., 223.

There are many examples of concrete poetry from this period.[14] The door between the real world and the one contained in books was deliberately left open. Alexandria was a world of people, but its districts were denoted by letters as though the city were a text.[15] The Alexandrian Library is a universe of the imagination with its many fields denoted by book scrolls. Characters contained within these scrolls mirrored the living population of Alexandria. The book is its own subject, and, if the subject is human, its own speaker. *Lyde* [the book] is Lyde herself speaking; the Muses, who spoke through the poets, are imagined as scrolls.[16]

In such a climate, writers were acutely aware of themselves as writers. Before the third century, the word *grammatikos* meant "able to read and write"; in the third century, *grammatikos* changed its meaning from "literate" to "literary," and, as a specialist in the written word, this was the self-designation of the Alexandrian scholar poets.[17] Callimachus draws the reader's attention to the fact that he is a writer when he describes the moment of his poetic initiation.[18] Like Hesiod, Callimachus describes the moment when he first became a poet in religious terms. Both poets claim to have been visited by deities in charge of poetry. The Muses visit Hesiod on Mt. Helicon, and give him a staff, as an honorary symbol entitling him to practise poetry. Callimachus is visited by Apollo, who instructs him in the type of poetry he likes. Unlike Hesiod, Callimachus is visited when he is about to start writing. He is not the singer of earlier years, but the writer. The same consciousness pervades Apollonius' *Argonautica*. In evoking Homeric epic, Apollonius is concerned with showing how the relationships among the poet, the poem, and the audience change when the performance is replaced by the book.

Unless there existed a pan-Ionian sustaining fund for the preservation of epics nobody wanted to listen to, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* must have had

---

[14] These exercises, called *technopaignia*, are collected by A. S. F. Gow, *Bucolici Graeci* (Oxford, 1952), 171–85. They are analyzed by John Onians, *Art and Thought in the Hellenistic Age: The Greek World View 350–50 BC* (London, 1979), 105–10.

[15] Bing, *The Well-Read Muse*, 45–46.

[16] Ibid., 15–48. Cf. the story in Lucian where a Cynic philosopher tears up a copy of the *Bacchae* into pieces, on the grounds that this is kinder to Pentheus than being torn up when read by an illiterate (*The Ignorant Book-Collector*, 19).

[17] Pfeiffer gives an account of the growing awareness scholars had of themselves as a class in *History of Classical Scholarship*, 156–58. The word *grammatikos* appears first in Philicus' *Hymn to Demeter* (from Hephaestion, *Enchiridion*, p. 30, quoted by Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 2, 662, n. 95). Callimachus is called a *grammatikos* (Strabo, 1.2.37; Athenaeus 3.72a; life of Apollonius b; Suda-Life, *Test.* 1 Pf.). For more on Callimachus as *grammatikos*, see below, pp. 32–34.

[18] Segal, "Greek Tragedy," 45, n. 16.

an audience. The *Odyssey* reveals more about its own performance than the *Iliad*, because comedy points to the artificiality of form.[19] The setting of the ideal Homeric performance can be deduced because the poet invites the audience into the poem. The typical setting for recitations of epic poetry was the banquet.[20] Whether fictions created by professional poets or events recalled from experience, the many narratives of the *Odyssey* almost always follow a meal.[21] In turn, every civilized feast ends with a story. When Odysseus has two stories to tell Eumaeus, he eats dinner twice (*Od.* 14.72–408, 413–517). Homer brings together his audience and his characters through the medium of the feast.

The audience would have already regarded the feast as a means of entering the presence of their gods and ancestors—the very groups depicted in Homeric fiction. Ancient sacrifices were held as feasts, with humans and gods dining together.[22] The observers of the *Iliad* are the gods, presented as forever banqueting.[23] Homer makes room for his human banqueters at the feasts on Olympus. Since his poetry will always find an audience, his listeners are immortal. But they are only minor deities, unable to reach down into the battlefield to save a particular favorite.

In the *Odyssey*, the dinner companions are less impressive. Instead of dining with gods, Homer's audience sits down with Odysseus. Nevertheless, the dramatic illusion amply compensates for the loss of social standing. According to religious beliefs, the dead joined the living at funeral banquets and on memorial occasions thereafter.[24] In Odysseus' visit to Hades, the poet alludes to this practice when the dead

---

[19] Muecke, "Playing with the Play," 55–56. Beye finds a perfect symmetry of opposites in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as a tragic poem and a comic poem (*Ancient Greek Literature and Society*, 181).

[20] Hermann Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy: A History of Greek Epic, Lyric, and Prose to the Middle of the Fifth Century*, trans. Moses Hadas and James Willis (Oxford, 1975), 9–14. C. M. Bowra cites ancient sources for evidence that heroic poetry followed a feast: Athenaeus 4.152; Diodorus 5.31; examples from the *Odyssey* are 1.150–55, 8.72–83, and 8.485–521 (*Heroic Poetry* [London, 1952], 413).

[21] Phemius: 1.150–54; Athena: 1.179–212; Telemachus and Nestor: 3.67–328; Telemachus, Helen, and Menelaus: 4.68–295; Demodocus: 8.72–82, 485–520; Odysseus: Books 9–12, 14.111–359, 454–517; Eumaeus: 15.303–484. There are three exceptions: Menelaus' tale to Telemachus (4.306–569), and Odysseus' tales to Athena (13.256–86) and Penelope (19.164–202).

[22] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, 1985), 57, 107, 213.

[23] Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 55, n. 7; Jasper Griffin, "The Divine Audience and the Religion of the *Iliad*," *CQ*, 28 (1978), 11–14.

[24] Banquets for the dead are discussed by Lewis Richard Farnell, *Greek Hero Cult and the Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford, 1921), 52–53. For the feast joining the living and dead, see Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 192–95, 240.

cannot speak until they have received an offering of blood.[25] Having tasted the blood, the ghosts, just the other narrators in the poem, tell an after-dinner story. In a more powerful use of the custom, the poet uses the feast as a medium to impersonate Odysseus.

According to an ancient literary theory, the essence of art is deception. The poet who deceives is more honest than the one who does not; an audience deceived is more intelligent than one that is not.[26] For Homer's audience to identify itself with the charming and intelligent Phaeacians required not so much intelligence as complacency. The events of a festival—sports and feasting—are reflected in the Phaeacians' activities on the day of Odysseus' visit. This allowed Homer's listeners to imagine such a day as typical of their lives.[27] In return for the compliment, the audience was encouraged to lavish on Homer the same generosity and approval given to Odysseus by the Phaeacians.[28]

Homer uses the setting of the performance for dramatic realism in two scenes. When he tells his adventures to the Phaeacians, Odysseus pre-empts Demodocus, the court poet. His comment on the pleasure of after-dinner poetry is directed to the audiences both inside and outside the narrative (*Od.* 9.3–11). Inside, the Phaeacians have been listening to Demodocus, replaced by Odysseus; outside, the audience listened to Homer, displaced by Odysseus. Hearing Odysseus' fabulous stories narrated in the first person, Homer's listeners must have imagined they were listening to the hero himself.[29]

Like the feast of the Phaeacians, the fatal banquet of the suitors is structured to reflect the setting of the performance. In both scenes, Odysseus takes charge of the entertainment. For the pleasure of the Phaeacians, Odysseus plays the poet, having replaced Demodocus for the evening. With the bow in his hand, he plays the part of Penelope's suitor. In both scenes, the hero reveals himself to an assembly at a feast. For the Phaeacians, who are generous hosts, the revelation serves as prelude to thrilling tales; for the suitors, who are stingy marauders, it

---

[25] To be sure, Book 11 of the *Odyssey* may be spurious. For a clear analysis of its inconsistencies, see Denys L. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* (Oxford, 1955), 21–51.

[26] This idea is attributed to Simonides and Gorgias (Plutarch, *Mor.* 15d, 348c); to Cleobulina (frag. 2 Diels-Kranz); and it appears without attribution in the anonymous *Dissoi Logoi* (3.10–12 Diels-Kranz).

[27] H. T. Wade-Gery, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge, 1952), 14. This is disputed by Page, *The Homeric Odyssey*, 76.

[28] *Od.* 11.336–69, 13.10–15. Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 12; Werner Suerbaum, "Die Ich-erzählungen des Odysseus: Überlegungen zur epischen Technik der Odyssee," *Poetica*, 2 (1968), 168.

[29] Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 9–11; Suerbaum, "Die Ich-erzählungen des Odysseus," 165–69.

precedes a volley of deadly arrows.

The illusion of reality is strengthened by the sound of the poet's lyre, which merges with the sound of Odysseus' bow. Homer emphasizes the connection by likening the string of the bow to that of the lyre (*Od.* 21.404–11). When Odysseus tests the string, music floods the hall. Surely a performer would pluck his lyre to illustrate its likeness to the bow. The sound of the arrows makes its way into the world of Homer's audience as, with every twang of the lyre, a suitor drops dead. If we imagine ourselves in Dark Age Greece listening to a bard after dinner, we find a world connected to our own as we dine with Odysseus and Homer in a single banquet with banqueters real and fictional. By listening carefully, we hear the twang of arrows shot long ago from the great bow of the hero Odysseus.

Homer's performance melts the barrier between poem and audience through the medium of the feast. The audience's participation in the drama continues in Greek literature.[30] Pindar's odes reflect the setting of victory celebrations. Xanthus in Aristophanes' *Frogs* peers out past the orchestra and sees specters of Hell in the audience (273–76). An audience at a Homeric performance took part in a living story that was regularly renewed and had been retold time and again. The absence of the fixed text kept the ritual alive. Each retelling was a new performance, but the audiences and perhaps even the poets thought the same story was being told in the same way on each occasion.[31] Homer's audience joined with all previous ones and ultimately with Odysseus' original audience of Phaeacians.

The movement towards private reading has profound implications for society. After Alexander the Great unified the Greek world, the breakdown of community values turned poetry into a private activity rather than a public one.[32] In the performance, poet, heroes, and audience were joined together by moral values. Essentially, they all went to the same dinner parties. Attending a Homeric performance resembled going to church or the symphony. Participants at such gatherings publicly, if implicitly, declare that they share cultural values. Reading, on the other hand, is a private affair. One book looks like another, whether it contains vulgar stories or philosophy (cf. Lucian, *On Salaried Posts*, 41). Theocritus adopts the heroic meter to describe

---

[30] Kevin Crotty, *Song and Action: The Victory Odes of Pindar* (Baltimore 1982), 81-92; Reckford, *Aristophanes' Old-and-New Comedy*, 207–15.

[31] Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (New York, 1965), 20–29; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 57–68.

[32] Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, 44; Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 74–75; Bing, *The Well-Read Muse*, 17; Segal, "Greek Tragedy," 47, 55–59.

the pastoral world which Homer includes only in similes: his *Idylls* are essentially epic poems turned inside-out.[33] Apollonius' hexameters also look even more like Homer's from a distance, but a close reading reveals the differences between them.

Callimachus' opposition to epic poetry was to powerful as to alter the course of the Argonauts' voyage, which occurred centuries before his birth. In discussing his literary position, I will draw on his words and the opinions attributed to him by later poets. Without disparaging Homer, except for the occasional parody, Callimachus claimed a poetic territory that is everything Homeric poetry is not. Later writers could have followed Apollonius, when they intensified the opposition between Callimachus and Homer into a feud. Callimachus' admirers cast him as the love-poet who dared to reject epic poetry; his detractors cast him as a pedant taking up arms against a natural genius. Both distortions of Callimachus' program may have their roots in the *Argonautica.*

Robert Kellogg puts Callimachus into a large literary perspective:

> Callimachus makes a powerful case for minor poetry, not bad poetry but minor poetry, for silver poetry, for poetry that declares itself independent of, perhaps even inimical to, history and to all ideas of greatness. His poetic theory defines a new sensibility, civilized and aristocratic but lacking the ancient communal pieties and high seriousness, delighting instead in its own resourcefulness. The text becomes an occasion for exploring a cultivated individual sensibility that is defined in a literary, linguistic, and personal context shut off from civic or historic issues. Technically, this program is less decadent than it is a defense against decadence: the continued production of traditional forms after they have lost their original function and content. In such a literary culture, revivals of the earnest old forms can be enjoyed as camp perhaps, or as instruction of the young, but surely not as models for avant-garde poets.[34]

The conflict between major poetry and minor poetry has existed since the very beginning of Western literature, for the *Odyssey* mocks the hero of the *Iliad.* When Odysseus meets him in Hades, Achilles has reversed his position, and he disavows his choice of a heroic death.[35] Gone is the young man who chose a short, glorious life over a long, inglorious one, and who, grieving for Patroclus, wanted to die (*Il.* 9.412–16, 18.98–100). In the *Odyssey* Achilles looks up to the light. Gone too is his pride. To be alive, even if only as the day laborer for a poor man, is better than to rule over the dead (*Od.* 11.488–91). In the

---

[33] Bing, *The Well-Read Muse*, 47.

[34] Professor Robert Kellogg, in a personal letter.

[35] A. T. Edwards, "Achilles in the Underworld: *Iliad, Odyssey,* and *Aethiopis,*" GRBS, 26 (1985), 226-27.

Iliad Achilles was enraged by Agamemnon's insult to his aristocratic status, for treating him like a migrant worker (*Il.* 9.648, 16.59). He hated the thought of drowning in a river like a farmhand (*Il.* 21.282). When alive, Achilles had to be treated as an aristocrat. Now that he is dead, he has learned the insignificance of social position.

The opposition established by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* between major and minor poetry continues, and, in the fifth century, metaphorical language was attached to each. Pindar developed a vocabulary for literary criticism in odes that described poetry as well as the exploits of athletes.[36] Aristophanes took literary criticism onto the stage and dramatized the conflict between poetic styles. In his *Frogs*, the old-fashioned Aeschylus, with his heavy thundering, with his magniloquence and laboriously chained-together words, is pitted against the modern Euripides. In the fifth century the stern values of Aeschylus won out over the smooth arguments of Euripides, but the battle was not yet over. What was disputed on the Attic stage returned in book form two hundred years later.

In the Prologue to the *Aitia*, Callimachus adopts the terms formulated by Aristophanes and applies them to himself and his opponents.[37] Like Aristophanes' Euripides, Callimachus claims to live on air alone and praises what is "delicate" (λεπτός); Aristophanes' Aeschylus and the admirers of epic poetry thunder, and their poetry is heavy.[38] Callimachus models his enemies on the bombastic Aeschylus, and himself on the chirping Euripides.

Callimachus begins the Prologue by abusing people he calls the Telchines, because they condemn his poetry for not being epic:

> . . . . . .] μοι Τελχῖνες ἐπιτρύζουσιν ἀ[οιδῇ,
> νήιδε]ς οἳ Μούσης οὐκ ἐγένοντο φίλοι,
> εἵνεκε]ν οὐχ ἓν ἄεισμα διηνεκὲς ἢ βασιλ[η
> . . . . . .]ας ἐν πολλαῖς ἤνυσα χιλιάσιν
> ἢ. . . . . .] ους ἥρωας. . . . . .
>
> (*Ait.* frag. 1.1–5)

---

[36] See, for example, C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford, 1964), 1–41.

[37] For the origin of Callimachus' literary terminology in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, see Walter Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom: Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit* (Wiesbaden, 1960), 115, n. 1.

The bibliography on Callimachus is enormous. A good introduction is offered by Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1, 717–93; see also the studies of Hans Herter, "Kallimachos aus Kyrene," 184–266; Williams, *Hymn to Apollo*; Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*; Athanasios Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik: Untersuchungen zu Hesiodos, Kallimachos, Properz und Ennius* (Heidelberg, 1965), 69–123. Callimachus' complete poems and fragments are collected by Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, Vols. 1 and 2; Lloyd-Jones and Parsons, *Supplementum Hellenisticum*, 89–144.

[38] *Frogs* 892/ *Ait.* frag. 1.34; *Frogs* 828, 876, 956, 1108, 1111/ *Ait.* frags. 1.11, 1.24, and *Epigram* 27.3; *Frogs* 814/ *Ait.* frag. 1.20; *Frogs* 940–41/ *Ait.* frag. 1.23–24.

... the Telchines grumble at my song,
ignorant, who were not born friends of the Muse,
just because I have not completed in many thousands of lines
a unified, continuous song on kings or heroes ....

Callimachus sets forth his literary theories in another famous passage, the epilogue of his *Hymn to Apollo*. After the poet has praised Apollo in his *Hymn*, the demon Phthonos, "Envy," sidles up to the god and whispers:

"Οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν ἀοιδὸν ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος ἀείδει."
(*H. Ap.* 2.106)

"I do not like the poet who does not sing as much as the sea."

In other words, Phthonos demands from the poet a Homeric poem. The sea was later to be a key word for epic poetry in later literature.[39] Ocean was the mythic stream of pure water encircling the earth, the source of all rivers and springs. With this metaphor for epic poetry, Callimachus honors Homer, from whom all forms of poetry stream. On a visual level, however, the actual sea represents the vastness and uniformity that Callimachus avoids in his own poetry. Apollo, who spurns Phthonos, distinguishes between the two forms of poetry available for a contemporary poet: the river and the spring. Modern epic poetry is like a large river collecting "filth" (λύματα, *H. Ap.* 2.108–109); one thinks of the interpolations in Homer. Instead, Apollo recommends the "small spring" of pure water (πῖδαξ, *H. Ap.* 2.108–112). This image too was to recur in later poetry.[40]

These two passages, though appearing in widely different contexts, are similar in structure and detail.[41] In the *Hymn*, Callimachus is defended by Apollo; in the *Prologue*, Apollo instructs him in the art of poetry. Varied images convey a consistent message: avoid the long and large. In each case, Apollo upholds Callimachean poetry against Phthonos, "Envy," and the envious Telchines.[42] In essence, Phthonos

---

[39] Williams, *Hymn to Apollo*, 87–89, 98–99.

[40] See examples in Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe*, 98–102; Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, 272–74.

[41] Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe*, 77–79; Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, 100. The Prologue of the *Aitia* and the *Hymn to Apollo* have been analyzed by Wimmel, 59–123; Kambylis, 69–122; Williams, *Hymn to Apollo*.

[42] For Phthonos as the bane of successful poets, the tradition goes back to Pindar (e.g., *Pyth*. 2.55). The Telchines were proverbially "envious" (φθονεροί, Hesychius and the *Suda*, *s.v. Telchines*), and Callimachus calls them a race of envy (*Ait.* 1.17). Myths about the Telchines have been collected by Hans Herter, "Telchinen," *RE* Ser. 2, Vol. 9 (1934), 197–224 (evil eye, 205–11; envy, 206). For more bibliography on them, see Williams, *Hymn to Apollo*, at 101.

and the Telchines criticize the poet for not writing epic poetry. The address to the Telchines acts as a prologue to the *Aitia*, a collection of short stories; the rebuke to Phthonos occurs in the epilogue of a hymn. Yet, the same god upholds the same literary principles against the same complaints uttered by the same critics.

Callimachus describes epic poetry as "unified" and "continuous" (ἕν and διηνεκές, *Ait.* 1.3). His *recusatio* goes beyond merely rejecting the length and the heroic material of epic.[43] As librarian at Alexandria, he organized all Greek literature into categories, which he published as the *Pinaces*, or lists.[44] Interest in cataloguing seems to have affected his poetic vision. His poems are alike only in their dissimilarity to one another. They vary in length, tone, meter, subject, genre, and even dialect.[45] Hymns to the gods flow from the same stylus that flicks out epigrams in a dazzling profusion of anecdotes, praise, and abuse. Trees talk to one another, as do birds. His wide range of interests requires eight-and-a-half columns in the index of Fraser's *Ptolemaic Alexandria*.[46] Because variety is the hallmark of Callimachean style, it is difficult to classify his own work or the works he esteems. His multi-faceted poetry is an antithesis to the uniformity of Homeric diction, dialect, meter, and tone. His *Aitia*—unconnected explanations for various kinds of customs, collected in four books—defy Homeric unity. Their effect is intentionally choppy.

Callimachus' attitude towards Homer is complex. No other poet ever achieved Homer's prestige; for Theocritus' philistine, Homer was enough for all (*Id.* 16.20). He was called the teacher of Greece (Plato, *Rep.* 606e, *Prot.* 339a), but some rejected him on moral grounds.[47] For

---

[43] Charles R. Beye calls him "relentlessly experimental" (*Apollonius' Argonautica: Epic and Romance* [Carbondale, 1982], 3).

[44] For what is known about the *pinaces*, see Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 127–34.

[45] For Alexandrian admiration of variety, see Sonya Lida Tarán, *The Art of Variation in the Hellenistic Epigram*, Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition, Vol. 9 (Leiden, 1979), *passim*; Walther Ludwig, "Die Kunst der Variation im hellenistischen Liebesepigramm," *L'Epigramme Grecque*, Fondation Hardt pour l'Étude de l'Antiquité Classique, Entretiens, Vol. 14 (Geneva, 1967), 299–334.

[46] Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 3, 17–21.

[47] Heraclitus thought he should be expelled (frag. 42); Xenophanes condemned his portrayal of the gods (*Silloi* frags. 21 B 11, 14, 15, and 16 Diels-Kranz). Plato banned Homer from his ideal state because, unlike Socrates, he was dangerous to young minds (*Rep.* 606e–607a). Havelock argues that it was the emotional, irrational appeal of the Homeric performance to which Plato objected (*Preface to Plato*, passim). For Homer as the educator of Greece, see Werner Jaeger, *Paeideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 2d ed., trans. Gilbert Highet (New York, 1945), Vol. 1, 34–56; H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York, 1956), 34–36. See Timothy M. S. Baxter, *The Cratylus: Plato's Critique of Naming* (Leiden, 1992), 92–93, and 114–26 for ancient attempts to justify Homer through allegory.

the Alexandrians, Homer is the divine poet who lives forever in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.[48] Callimachus honors Homer, but attacks Homer's modern imitators as blasphemers. He pokes fun at demigod kings, and, while they may occasionally be long (the *Aitia*), or continuous (the *Hecale*), they are never both.

It is not immediately clear why Callimachus calls his enemies Telchines. In mythology, they were Rhodian demons, who made famous metal statues of the gods and had magical powers, including the evil eye.[49] Elsewhere, Callimachus mentions their punishment for "sinful arrogance" (ἀλιτρὴ ὕβρις, *Ait.* frag. 75.68). Their sinfulness should be literary because, according to Callimachus' formulation, poetic errors violate the laws of the gods as well as those of art. In the *Hymn to Apollo*, religious words take on a metaphorically literary meaning.[50] The "sinful men," denied entrance to the temple of Apollo (ἀλιτροί, *H. Ap.* 2.2), may include poets who offended the god by composing epic poetry. The word "sinful" has a literary meaning when used by Philip of Thessalonica. This poet of late antiquity attacked Callimachus and his followers by turning Callimachean insults against them.[51] Philip calls them "Telchines of books" and "sinful" (*A.P.* 11.321). Consequently, "Telchines" and "sinful" have the same literary connotation. If the Telchines' sin has a literary application, it must somehow be connected with a taste for epic poetry.

Both the Telchines and Callimachus' enemies are artistic—sculptors and literary critics.[52] Callimachus calls his enemies Telchines because Rhodes offered the world a spectacular image for epic poetry. The Colossus of Rhodes dominated the harbor at Lindus during most of the third century B.C.[53] The Telchines made bronze statues of the gods; the Colossus was an bronze statue of the god Helios.[54] Made from bronze left by Demetrius Poliorcetes' abortive siege and completed in 290, the Colossus stood one hundred feet tall until toppled by an earthquake in 226. Consequently, it existed intact during most of Callimachus' creative life. Even after it fell, the Colossus, slumped down in the harbor, remained one of the Seven Wonders of the World

---

[48] Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 137, 230.

[49] Elsewhere, in *Ait.* frag. 75.64–69, Callimachus mentions a variant tradition, which he attributes to Xenomedes, that the Telchines lived on Ceos. For their evil eye, see above, n. 42.

[50] Williams, *Hymn to Apollo*, 24 on ἐσθλός, and 57 on θεμείλια Φοῖβος.

[51] Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1, 758; see below, pp. 32–34.

[52] Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, 72–73; Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe*, 76.

[53] For information on the Colossus, see H. Maryon, "The Colossus of Rhodes," *JHS*, 76 (1956), 68–86; C. Robert, "Chares," *RE* 3 (1899), 2130–31.

[54] Herter, " Telchinen," 203–4, citing Diodorus 5.55.2; for the Colossus as Helios, see Maryon, "The Colossus," 68–70, citing Strabo 14.2.5.

(Strabo 14.2.5; Antipater of Thessalonica, *A.P.* 9.58.3). According to Pliny, its thumb was too broad for a man's arms to encompass (*N.H.* 34.18.41). The word colossus originally meant "doll" (as at *Agamemnon* 416), but through the influence of the Colossus, it took on its present meaning.[55] Theocritus uses the word in that sense in his description of Amycus, whose brutal competitiveness parodies the epic spirit. He likens Amycus to a colossus and continues the image by describing Amycus' flesh as resembling iron pounded out by a hammer (*Id.* 22.47). The Colossus is a visual symbol for monumental poetry celebrating Bronze Age heroes, and Longinus compares Homer's poetry to the Colossus (36). Sculptors of such pieces could easily symbolize the proponents of epic poetry. When it stood upright in the harbor of Rhodes, Callimachus' readers would have connected the Telchines with the makers of huge, bronze statues. Apollonius implies such a connection at the end of the *Argonautica*, when the fall of Talos, a living Colossus, symbolizes the end of epic poetry (below, pp. 136–38).

For epic, Callimachus developed a rich vein of metaphor, often of parody.[56] "Keep your sacrifice as fat as possible," Apollo tells Callimachus, "but keep your Muse slender" (*Ait.* frag. 1.23–24). This advice is followed in his portrayal of Heracles in the *Hymn to Artemis*. Heracles, legendary even among the heroes of the *Iliad*, has retired, and, according to Callimachus, his heroic temperament has undergone a change.[57] Homer likens battling warriors to animals ferocious with hunger. Callimachus develops this image by presenting the hero with muscle turned to fat. Heracles awaits Artemis' return in the epic manner:[58]

νῦν δ' οὐκέτι Φοῖβος ἄεθλον
τοῦτον ἔχει, τοῖος γὰρ ἀεὶ Τιρύνθιος ἄκμων
ἕστηκε πρὸ πυλέων ποτιδέγμενος, εἴ τι φέρουσα
νεῖαι πῖον ἔδεσμα ... .

(*H. Art.* 3.145–48)

But now no longer does Phoebus have this

---

[55] Eduard Fraenkel, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon* (Oxford, 1962), *ad loc.*

[56] Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, 99.

[57] Heracles is often referred to in the *Iliad* as a prototype of all heroes. For his being the subject of epic poems by Peisander, Creophylus, and Panyassis, see G. L. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis* (Cambridge, 1969), 99–112, 178–86.

[58] K. J. McKay, "Mischief in Kallimachos' Hymn to Artemis," *Mnemosyne*, 16 (1963), 244–45. The transition is easy from a hero greater than normal men to one who is merely larger. Aristophanes presents Heracles as a glutton in the *Peace* and the *Frogs*. The association of epic heroism with gluttony goes back to criticism of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus' concern for food struck some as inappropriate in a hero, as W. B. Stanford points out, *The Ulysses Theme* (1954; rev. rpt. Oxford, 1963), 69–70. For that reason, perhaps, Hipponax begins his account of a glutton with words from the first line of the *Odyssey*, Μοῦσα μοι (Athenaeus 698b–c, frag. 128 West). This joke plays into Callimachus' dichotomy between great and small poetry.

labor, for thus the anvil of Tiryns always
stands before the gates waiting, in case
you come back bringing a fat morsel . . . .

Like Hector, Heracles stands in a heroic pose outside the gate and waits, not for a deadly foe but for something good to eat. The hunger for glory has changed into desire for food. For his *aethloi*, "labors," Heracles was rewarded with eternal life on Olympus; now his *aethlos*, "labor" (145) is to carry the animal home for dinner.

And this animal had better be large, the parody continues. As an epic hero described by Callimachus, Heracles urges Artemis to pit herself against big animals, bulls and boars:

"βάλλε κακοὺς ἐπὶ θῆρας, ἵνα θνητοί σε βοηθόν
ὣς ἐμὲ κικλήσκωσιν. ἔα πρόκας ἠδὲ λαγωούς
οὔρεα βόσκεσθαι· τί δέ κεν πρόκες ἠδὲ λαγωοί
ῥέξειαν; σύες ἔργα, σύες φυτὰ λυμαίνονται.
καὶ βόες ἀνθρώποισι κακὸν μέγα· βάλλ' ἐπὶ καὶ τούς."
"Ὣς ἔνεπεν, ταχινὸς δὲ μέγαν περὶ θῆρα πονεῖτο.
Οὐ γὰρ ὅγε Φρυγίῃ περ ὑπὸ δρυὶ γυῖα θεωθείς
παύσατ' ἀδηφαγίης· ἔτι οἱ πάρα νηδὺς ἐκείνη,
τῇ ποτ' ἀροτριόωντι συνήντετο Θειοδάμαντι.
(*H. Art.* 3.153–61)

"Shoot at evil wild animals so that men may call you helper
as they call me. Leave deer and hares
to feed on the mountains; for what harm can deer and hares
do? Boars damage crops, boars damage plants.
Bulls too are a great evil for men. Shoot at them, too."
Thus he spoke and swiftly busied himself about the great animal.
For though immortalized in his limbs under the Phrygian oak tree,
he did not cease from gluttony, but that stomach is still with him
which led him once to fight the plowman, Theiodamas.

Heracles is disingenuous in his pose as a philanthropist. After all, bulls, which he calls a "great evil," are valuable possessions, whereas hares and deer, whatever Heracles says, do great damage to crops. They are, however, too small to make a satisfying meal for Heracles, who encourages Artemis to bring back large animals. By mentioning Theiodamas, Callimachus underscores his criticism. Heracles killed Theiodamas because he wanted to eat his bull.[59] This discreditable incident casts a shadow on two of his other labors, the Cretan Bull and the Bulls of Geryon.

In Homer and Hesiod, cattle-raids lead to war. Achilles, for example, says he has no grudge against the Trojans because they have

---

[59] Elsewhere Callimachus has Heracles ask Theiodamas for food to feed his hungry son (*Ait.* frags. 24–25), but in the hymn he attributes the murder to greed.

never come against his herds (*Il.* 1.152–54). Hesiod calls the flocks of Oedipus the reason for the wars that follow his death (*Op.* 163). When Callimachus alludes to the duel between Heracles and Theiodamas, he implies a connection between Heracles' heroic behavior and his gluttony. Moreover, when Heracles reminds Artemis that bulls are "a big evil" (157), he unknowingly alludes to Callimachus' famous equation, "a big book is a big evil" (frag. 465). Large animals symbolize Heracles' preoccupations, which Callimachus suggests are identical: heroic glory and big dinners.

Elsewhere, Callimachus actually does write a continuous narrative about a royal hero in over a thousand lines. The *Hecale* was said to have been his proof that he could write an epic (schol. at *H. Ap.* 2.106). Nevertheless, the poem cheats the reader who expects to read about Theseus' glorious deeds.[60] The subject of the poem is Hecale, an old woman who gives Theseus shelter one night on his journey to capture the bull of Marathon. Leaving aside the hero and his quest, Callimachus describes in painstaking detail how Hecale cooks Theseus' dinner. Callimachus inverts the Homeric canvas, as if a professional photographer should ignore the model posing before the lens and instead focus on someone in the background. Callimachus achieves the same effect in a poem that passes over Heracles and the Nemean Lion in favor of the peasant Molorchus (*SH* 254–69).

To distinguish his poetry from Homer's, Callimachus adopted, or claimed to adopt, Hesiod's poetry as his model.[61] Their poetry, to be sure, was alike in many respects. Hesiod wrote didactic poetry on subjects ranging from agriculture to mythology; he alluded to his own artistic craft; and, unlike Homer, he spoke of himself. Callimachus praises Hesiod directly (*Ep.* 27), and alludes to Hesiod's dream in the second invocation to the *Aitia* (*Ait.* frag. 2).

The opposition of Callimachus and Homer, implicit in Callimachus' poetry, was made explicit when Callimachus' name was mentioned by later writers. The bookishness of Alexandrian poetry gave *grammatikos* its final meaning, "pedantic." To later poets, Callimachus was emblematic of an age condemned for useless pedantry. As *grammatikos*, he was one who tried to reduce the great poet to a heap of philological minutiae. Typical is the abusive poem directed against his followers by

---

[60] G. Zanker, "Callimachus' Hecale: A New Kind of Epic Hero?" *Antichthon*, 11 (1977), 68–77. Fragments of the *Hecale* are collected into an annotated edition by Hollis, *Callimachus: Hecale*.

[61] John Kevin Newman, *The Classical Epic Tradition* (Madison, 1986), 19–20; Hannelore Reinisch-Werner, *Callimachus Hesiodicus: Die Rezeption der hesiodischen Dichtung durch Kallimachos von Kyrene* (Berlin, 1976), 4–5 and *passim*.

Philip of Thessalonica (1st or 2nd century A.D.):

> Γραμματικοὶ Μώμου στυγίου τέκνα, σῆτες ἀκανθῶν,
> τελχῖνες βίβλοων, Ζηνοδότου σκύλακες,
> Καλλιμάχου στρατιῶται, ὃν ὡς ὅπλον ἐκτανύσαντες,
> οὐδ' αὐτοῦ κείνου γλῶσσαν ἀποστρέφετε,
> συνδέσμων λυγρῶν θηρήτορες, οἷς τὸ "μὶν " ἢ "σφὶν"
> εὔαδε, καὶ ζητεῖν εἰ κύνας εἶχε Κύκλωψ,
> τρίβοισθ' εἰς αἰῶνα κατατρύζοντες ἀλιτροὶ
> ἄλλων· ἐς δ' ἡμᾶς ἰὸν ἀποσβέσατε.
>
> (Philip *A.P.* 11.321)

> *Grammatikoi*, children of Stygian Momus, worms feeding on thorns,
> Telchines of books, puppies of Zenodotus,
> soldiers of Callimachus, whom you hold before you like a shield
> and you do not turn away his tongue,
> you hunters of grim verbal combinations, who like "*min*" and "*sphin*"
> [archaic pronouns] and to research whether the Cyclops had dogs,
> may you be worn away for eternity, you sinful grumblers against the works
> of others, and then extinguish your poison against me.

The *Greek Anthology* contains many attacks on the *grammatikoi*.[62] Some authors of these poems are like Philip in picking up Callimachus' literary terms and images and hammering them into weapons. These weapons were at hand because a large portion of Callimachus' poetry is concerned with poetic controversy.[63] Callimachus likens his poetry to the song of a cricket (*Ait.* 1.29), which was proverbially sweet.[64] His contemporary, Leonidas of Tarentum, describes the cricket as "treading on the thorn" (*A.P.* 7.198). Philip changes the insect from cricket to book-worm and gives it the diet of thorns because scholars busy themselves with "thorny" problems.[65] Like bookworms nibbling away at pages of books, the pedants try to destroy great poets by niggling queries (*A.P.* 11.321, 322; 16.19a). To the unfavorable stereotype of the pedant is added abstinence from "manly" drunkenness. Callimachus' own image for his poetry—the spring of pure water—may have given rise to this idea. Antipater of Thessalonica, a Greek poet in the Augustan Age, calls Callimachus' followers the "water-drinkers," against

---

[62] *A.P.* 9.168–75; 11.20, 138–40, 278–79, 305, 321–22, 347, 383, 399–400; 16.19a.

[63] Philip parodies Callimachus' Prologue to the *Aitia*. There, Callimachus attacks his enemies as Telchines, who ἐπιτρύζουσιν "grumble," at his song. Philip attacks the Telchines of books as κατατρύζοντες, "grumbling," at the works of others.

[64] Hesiod, *Op.* 582; Simonides 173, 174; Plato, *Phaedrus* 262d; Theocritus 7.41. See Lefkowitz for the identification of the poet with the cricket (*The Lives of the Greek Poets*, 4, n. 9 and 29, citing Archilochus, frag. 223 W).

[65] Cf. Antipater of Thessalonica and Antiphanes (*A.P.* 11.20, 322)—the latter uses Leonidas' adjective, "treading on thorns." For this meaning of ἄκανθα, see also Lucian, *Hesiod* 5, *Dialogues of the Dead* 10.8; Athenaeus 3.97d. Latin *spina* and *spinosus* are used with a similar meaning.

whom he sets the wine-drinking Archilochus and Homer (*A.P.* 11.20).[66] Apollonius may have contributed to this unfair portrait of Callimachus because he characterizes the Callimachean narrator as a malicious and dreary academic.

Apollonius' Callimachean narrator may also have been responsible for an equally distorted view of the real Callimachus. In Rome, Callimachus' refusal to write epic—the *recusatio*—was treated as a decision to write about love. The Roman love poets claimed Callimachus as their model with such infectious enthusiasm that only lately have scholars given up the hope of recovering his love poems from the sands of Egypt.[67] There is, however, no evidence that Callimachus wrote serious love poetry.[68] He wrote love epigrams, but each to a different person; he told the love-story of Acontius and Cydippe (*Ait.* frags. 67–75), but from the outside, with no interest in the couple's psychology. He cannot have served as the model for the introspective poems created by the Roman love poets.[69] They were the first to narrate the vicissitudes of a single love affair from the point of view of a man contemplating his erotic situation. In attaching love poetry to the Callimachean *recusatio*, Propertius and Ovid may have followed the lead of Apollonius, even though they do not mention him by name.

In transforming Callimachus into a love poet, Apollonius follows

---

[66] It is not known when wine-drinkers and water-drinkers were distinguished from each other: see Peter Knox, "Wine, Water, and Callimachean Polemics," *HSCP*, 89 (1985), 107–19. Although Callimachus calls Archilochus a drunkard (frag. 544), this does not imply a polemic against those who find inspiration from wine (Knox, 112). In the epitaph Callimachus wrote for himself (*Ep.* 35 Pf.), he enjoys witty remarks over wine. Knox suggests that Antipater of Thessalonica developed the idea that Callimachus was a water-drinker (112).

[67] Propertius 2.34.31–32, Ovid, *A.A.* 3.329, *R.A.* 381–82, 759–60, *Trist.* 2.367–68. Propertius opposed Homer and love poetry (1.9.11; cf. Ovid, *R.A.* 381–82). For the history of this discussion, see Archibald A. Day, *The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy* (Oxford, 1938), 1–36. To be sure, there are many sources for Roman love poetry, as Day points out: epyllion, elegy, new comedy, and bucolic. For the influence of comedy, see Day, 85–101; Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 74–75, 122–24; Richard F. Thomas, "New Comedy, Callimachus, and Roman Poetry," *HSCP*, 83 (1979), 179–206.

Propertius seems to honor Apollonius for his contribution to love poetry when he writes the genealogy of his predecessors in love elegy (2.34.85–94). His list begins with Varro, who translated the *Argonautica* into Latin: Haec quoque perfecto ludebat Iasone Varro/ Varro Leucadiae maxima flamma suae, "When his Jason was finished, Varro played at these themes, Varro, the greatest flame of his Leucadia" (85–86). Propertius then goes on to list Catullus, Calvus, Gallus, and himself. The repeated *Varro/Varro* at the end of one line and the beginning of the next emphasizes the transition from objective love epic to subjective love elegy. Apollonius narrated the story of Medea from the outside; the Roman poet enters his own narrative as a protagonist. The poet observer became the poet self-observer.

[68] Day, *The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy*, 26–36.

[69] Ibid., 36.

two well-established connections to their logical conclusions. First, Callimachus took his critical vocabulary from the Euripides of Aristophanes' *Frogs*. There, Euripides, who devoted his talents to psychological portraiture, is mocked by Aeschylus for his love-sick women (*Frogs* 1043–44).[70] A poet writing under Euripides' influence could be said to choose love as a theme, even if Callimachus did not. Second, there was the long-standing opposition between heroic poetry and love poetry (below, pp. 107–8). A Callimachean poet seeking to avoid the mistake of writing epic poetry might well choose love stories as a theme. In the *Argonautica*, characters echo Callimachus as they transform the story into a romance. Along with establishing love as a Callimachean theme, the poet identifies certain moral choices and characteristics as Callimachean—seduction, treachery, and cowardice. The real Callimachus might well have resented these qualities being imputed to him.

In another radical change of Callimachus' program, Apollonius adopts a pose of self-disparagement in his claim to be unable to write epic poetry. His poem is too slight to sustain a hero of Heracles' magnitude (below, p. 64). In this too he may have inspired the Roman poets. Horace excuses his reluctance to praise Agrippa and Augustus on the grounds that he lacks the talent and strength needed to write epic (*Ode* 1.6). The Roman love poets give the same excuse: they are incapable of greater things: their poems are *nugae*, "trifles" their muse

---

[70] Herter makes the connection between Euripides' introduction of love to the stage and Apollonius' presentation of its growth and decay (*Bericht* 2, 295–96). Fusillo points out that love is a Hellenistic concern rather than Homeric (*Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 17).

[71] Like Apollonius, the Roman poets present themselves as unable to compose epic poetry, rather than unwilling. When stopped by Apollo, Vergil is composing songs about kings and battles (*Ecl.* 6.3–5); Horace, about battles and captured cities (*Ode* 4.15.1–4); and Propertius is about to drink from Ennius' big river (3.3.1–24). Their self-depreciation should not be taken very seriously, however. When Horace claims he is unable to praise Agrippa properly, he likens the task to describing the *gravem Pelidae stomachum*, "great wrath of Achilles" (*Ode* 1.6.5–6). In context, and in its allusion to the first line of the *Iliad*, *stomachus* must mean "wrath." Nevertheless, the primary meaning of *stomachus* is "stomach." A *gravis stomachus* is a "heavy stomach." Horace's Achilles, then, is very similar to Callimachus' Heracles.

Brooks Otis, "Horace and the Elegists," TAPA, 76 (1945), comments on the humble place of love poetry in the hierarchy of genres. See also R. Frank, "Catullus 51: *Otium* versus *Virtus*," TAPA, 99 (1968), 233–39; Archibald W. Allen, "Elegy and the Classical Attitude toward Love," YCS, 11 (1950), 253–77; Joy K. King, "Propertius' Programmatic Poetry and the Unity of the *Monobiblos*," CJ, 7 (1975), 111–13; Ernst Fredricksmeyer, "The Beginning and End of Catullus' *Longus Amor*," SO, 58 (1983), 75. For the inversion of elegiac values over epic, see Steele Commager, A *Prolegomenon to Propertius*, Semple Lectures (Norman, 1974), 42–43; N. Wiggers, "Reconsideration of Propertius II.1," CJ, 72 (1977), 338; Joy K. King, "Propertius 2.1–12: His Callimachean Second Libellus," *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft*, N. F. 6 (1980), 65; and her "Propertius' Programmatic Poetry," 124.

is *tenuis*, "thin" their disposition is *mollis*, "soft."[71] For the Roman poets, self-depreciation was practical, given the times and the power of the men who sought immortality for themselves and their deeds.

Unlike Homeric performers, writers have identities fixed in time. With the invention of writing, the poet and audience are physically lost to each other, held together only by words on a page. The poet and the song have merged together in rolls of papyrus. Apollonius, however, manages to separate the poet from the song by combining a Callimachean voice and a Homeric song. The combination, in turn, invites the reader to contemplate the process of reading.

CHAPTER THREE

BEGINNING WITH APOLLO

The *Argonautica* begins with a misleading declaration of Homeric unity.[1] The narrator sends Apollo a prayer that is reflected by the actions of the heroes inside the poem. They pay their respects to Apollo as a prelude to their adventures. The opening lines honor Apollo, the god of poetry:

> Ἀρχόμενος σέο, Φοῖβε, παλαιγενέων κλέα φωτῶν
> μνήσομαι ....
>
> (1.1–2)
>
> Beginning with you [or from you], Phoebus, the glorious deeds of ancient men
> I will commemorate ....

The narrator again ties Apollo to the poem with a direct address after he begins the story. Jason is sent after the Golden Fleece because King Pelias receives "your oracle" (1.8) warning him to beware of the man wearing one shoe. By the word *your*, Apollo is reminded his own oracle has set the story in motion.[2] He is both the god of poetry and the god responsible for the events set forth in this poem. Thus he stands at the start of the poet's poetic journey and the heroes' actual one.

So pervasive is the sense of a unified vision that we can almost imagine ourselves back in the days of Homeric epic. Present are all the components of an epic poem—god, heroes, deeds, and narrator—but the poem's voice is incoherent. Underneath the vision of unity, the pervasive dichotomy of the poem emerges. In the opening two lines, the Callimachean god of poetry is enmeshed in the formulae of a *Homeric Hymn*.

The *Homeric Hymns*, so called because they adopt epic dialect and

---

[1] The opening of the *Argonautica* (i.e., 1.1–608) has been examined in general by Donald N. Levin, *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined, I: The Neglected First and Second Books*, Mnemosyne Supp. 13 (Leiden, 1971), 9–58; A. Hurst, *Manière et cohérence*, 37–58; V. de Marco, "Osservazioni su Apollonio Rodio I 1–22," *Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di A. Rostagni* (Turin, 1963), 350–55; John F. Collins, "Studies in Book One of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius," Diss., Columbia University, 1967, 1–55; and Clauss, *The Best of the Argonauts*, 14–105.

[2] For bibliography on the genuineness of τεήν, "your," attested by the manuscripts, and at first rejected by scholars, see Herter, *Bericht* 2, 336. Pfeiffer suggests that Apollonius echoes Callimachus' *Ait*. frag. 18.9 (*ad loc.*).

formulae, come down from an unknown provenience. In the absence of external evidence, they are assigned dates by stylistic analysis. In antiquity the *Hymns* were thought to be centuries old.[3] In apparent allegiance to Homer, the first two lines of the *Argonautica* echo the formulae of the *Homeric Hymns*.[4]

Homeric Hymns open and close with allusions to the deity's role in the poem's creation, the *archê* "origin." The deity provides both the subject of the song and the festival for which it is composed.[5] The formula "I begin to sing," is always in the same metrical position in the first line of many *Hymns* (ἄρχομ' ἀείδειν, 2, 11, 13, 16, 22, 26, and 28). At the end of the *Hymn*, the deity is reminded of the honor he or she has received with the closing formula "having begun from you" (σεῦ ἀρξάμενος, *Hymns* 5, 9, and 31). The opening words of Apollonius' poem, *archomenos seo*, "beginning from you," simultaneously echo *archom'*, "I begin," at the start of a Homeric hymn and *seu arxamenos*, "having begun from you," at its close. The *Homeric Hymns* end with a formula leading to a new theme, *kai allês mnêsom' aoidês* (καὶ ἄλλης μνήσομ' ἀοιδῆς), "and I shall recount another song."[6] In the second line of the *Argonautica*, *mnêsomai*, "I shall recount," echoes the Homeric formula. The first two lines of the *Argonautica* create the illusion that a *Homeric Hymn* goes by at tremendous speed. Rejection of Homeric leisureliness in favor of Callimachean brevity balances an esthetic decision to honor the Callimachean god with Homeric formulae.

---

[3] T. W. Allen, W. R. Halliday, E. E. Sikes, *The Homeric Hymns*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1936), xciii–xcv. At the end of the fifth century, Thucydides attributed to Homer the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* (3.104).

[4] A scholiast on the *Argonautica* draws a parallel between the opening of the *Argonautica* and the hymnic openings of Aratus' *Phaenomena* and Theocritus' *Idyll* 17, and notes the custom of honoring the deity in a prelude (Wendel, *Scholia*, at 1.1). Clauss gives parallels (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 18–19). Collins points out that the only epic beginning in a similar way is the *Batrachomyomachia* ("Studies," 3). De Marco sees the opening as a *tour de force* by Apollonius, who shows that he can put hymnic elements to unaccustomed use ("Osservazioni," 350–55). E. S. Phinney, Jr. suggests that Apollonius was aware of the hymn's function as a prelude to epic, and that the first three words constitute the hymn and the rest of the *Argonautica*, the epic ("Apollonius Rhodius," Diss., Univ. of California, 1963, 158). For discussion of the *Homeric Hymns*, see Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 246–52.

[5] Elroy Bundy, "The Quarrel between Kallimachos and Apollonios, Part I: The Epilogue of Kallimachos's *Hymn to Apollo*," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*, 5 (1972), 52–54.

[6] *Hymns* 2, 3, 4, 6, 10, 19, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 33. For the transitional formula, see Bundy, "Quarrel," 52–54; and N. J. Richardson, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Oxford, 1974), 3–4, 324. According to Rudolph Pfeiffer, Callimachus parodies this formula at the end of the *Aitia* (frag. 112.9), where he uses it to mark the transition from one published book to another (*Philologus*, 87 [1932], 226, known to me from Bing, *The Well-Read Muse*, 19, n. 20a).

At the same time, the opening words allude in a learned way to what was thought to be a function of *Homeric Hymns*. Pindar (*Nem.* 2.1–3) and Thucydides (3.104) call the *Hymns* "preludes" because they introduce the performance of epic poetry, and this is implied by the conclusions of *Homeric Hymns* 31 and 32. Consequently, the formula *archomai* has a meaning applicable to a living context. The *Odyssey* may offer contemporary evidence for this practice, when the singer of the Phaeacians "began from the god" (θεοῦ ἄρχετο, *Od.* 8.499).[7]

In the case of the *Argonautica*, the hymnic prelude to an epic poem seems majestically appropriate. The story of the Argonauts' voyage was famous even in Homer's time. Speaking to Odysseus, Circe calls the Argo "a story known to all" (πᾶσι μέλουσα, *Od.* 12.70). Because the two greatest Greek warriors of the *Iliad*, Ajax and Achilles, are the sons of the Argonauts, the *Argonautica* may be expected to describe a time more heroic than that of the *Iliad*—an expectation apparently confirmed by the opening line. The announced theme, *klea phytôn*, "glorious deeds of people," echoes the *klea andrôn*, "glorious deeds of heroic men," a phrase that in Homer denotes epic poetry. Having isolated himself from the heroic sphere, Achilles cheers himself up by singing *klea andrôn* (*Il.* 9.189); the professional singer Demodocus sings *klea andrôn* to entertain the Phaeacian court (*Od.* 8.73). The allusion to heroic poetry—*klea*, "glorious deeds"—reinforces the Homeric address to Apollo as another indication the poem is epic. Once again, the poet refutes the very interpretation he seems determined to press upon the reader. The men performing the "glorious deeds" are ordinary people, not heroes. Moreover, the word not only fails to denote heroes, it may also include females.[8] Medea's entry into the poem might be heralded here by the use of a noun that does not specify gender.

Even though Apollo was the god of poetry and the one traditionally responsible for the Argonauts' voyage, he is the wrong god for an epic poem written in the third century B.C. Callimachus chose Apollo as the patron for his own anti-Homeric poetry, and because of Callimachus' influence, Apollo became the god who dissuaded poets from writing epic poetry.[9] In the first line of the *Argonautica*, the poet presents two contradictory aspects of Apollo that must have puzzled his readers and may well have annoyed them.

---

[7] Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 246.

[8] Simon Goldhill, *The Poet's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge, 1991), 288.

[9] Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, 135–41, citing Callimachus, *Ait.* frag. 1.21–29 and *H. Ap.* 2. 105–13; cf. Vergil, *Ecl.* 6.3–8; Propertius 3.3.13–26; Horace, *Ode* 4.15; and Ovid, *A.A.* 2.493–510.

The Callimachean god of poetry is addressed by the formulae of a *Homeric Hymn*, which in turn is miniaturized with Callimachean love of brevity. A god hostile to Homeric poetry is favored with a Homeric hymn, which serves as a prelude to the heroic deeds of ordinary men. The content is at variance with the style. To dedicate an epic to the Callimachean god of poetry belies the apparent harmony between narrator and characters and reveals the poet's duplicity.

The same inconsistency gives a tension to the catalogue of heroes, which is a standard feature of epic poetry (cf. *Il.* 2.484–760), but which is delivered in a Callimachean voice.[10] Following the Homeric precedent, the narrator calls on the Muses (1.22)—but to act as interpreters, not inspiration, as they are for Homer.[11] Instead of prompting the poet's imagination, the Muses now represent scholarship. The narrator under their influence adopts a professorial tone very different from the simple exposition of the oral poet.[12] The content is Homeric, while the style is Callimachean.

Moreover, although it is appropriate to begin a Homeric catalogue with an invocation to the Muses, the narrator evokes Callimachus' famous denunciation of epic poetry. The Prologue to the *Aitia* contains a double invocation to Apollo and the Muses. Like the *Aitia*, the *Argonautica* begins with an invocation to Apollo, as the origin of the expedition, and another to the Muses, as the interpreters of the tradition. By alluding to the invocations of the *Aitia* in his prologue, the narrator makes it clear he considers himself in the Callimachean tradition.

---

[10] See Clauss for other catalogues of Hellenistic poets (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 26).

[11] Theocritus (*Id.* 16.29, 17.115, 22.116) and Callimachus (*H. Art.* 3.186) imply an opposite relationship: poets are interpreters of the Muses. Guido Paduano, *Studi su Apollonio Rodio* (Rome, 1972), 95, n. 21 (with bibliography), believes it is evidence for the quarrel between Apollonius and these two contemporary poets. Fusillo sees a more positive relationship: the Muses are the poet's collaborators, not his servants (*Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 365–66). Clauss, however, finds a parallel in the Muses' function as interpreters with their role in the first two books of Callimachus' *Aitia* (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 17–18). D. C. Feeney argues that the poet shows a growing dependence on the Muses during the course of the poem (*The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* [Oxford, 1991]), 90–93. Goldhill uses this passage as evidence for Apollonius' ironic distance from the truthfulness of what he narrates (*The Poet's Voice*, 292–94). Bing observes that the Muses of Alexandria represent the sum of human knowledge accumulated in the Library (*The Well-Read Muse*, 36–37, 44–45). In that case, Apollonius may call on them as interpreters to assist the reader to understand his allusive and puzzling poetry. Elsewhere, he seems to identify the literary tradition with the Muses when he attributes to them a story told by Pindar (*Arg.* 4.1381–82; *Pyth.* 4.25–27), that the Argonauts carried their boat across the desert.

[12] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 22–23; Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, 90. Hunter points out that the narrator uses a verb from scholarship, ἐγκρίνειν (1.48, 227), which denotes the scholarly acumen required to compile such a list (*Literary Studies*, 127).

Apollonius' catalogue simultaneously presents a static list of names and a description of the living heroes in movement. While retaining the artificiality of the form, the poet breathes life into it. After the heroes are assembled, they proceed to the shore (1.234–40). The transition from a list of names to a group of men is imperceptible, as is seen in Beye's description:

> It is as though someone were to thrust a playbill into our hands, and that playbill so arbitrarily pressed upon us were slowly to animate itself until at length it becomes the characters who begin the enactment upon the stage. ... The Catalogue, indeed, is Apollonius' most telling advertisement for the delicate balance he will maintain between form and content, artifice and realism, empathetic presentation and intellectual organization.[13]

The hallmark of Apollonius' poetry is this interplay of form and content, as they split apart and combine through the conflict between Homeric and Callimachean styles.

At first, the poet seems concerned with showing a harmony between the narrator and heroes. Just as the narrator's abbreviated hymn to Apollo is a prelude to the epic poem, so, within the poem, the heroes' offerings to Apollo are a prelude to their epic adventures. As if to emphasize their mutual cooperation, the poet builds musical bridges between the narrator's words and those of the characters. In his inaugural speech, Jason echoes the narrator's *archomenos seo*, "beginning from you," when he announces his intention of starting with Apollo, *hou hethen exarchômai* "from him I will begin" (οὗ ἕθεν ἐξάρχωμαι, 1.362). He alludes to the sacrifice and the cult prayer, but his words go beyond the context to connect the narrator's prayer with the Argonauts' activities. Then, in turn, the Argonauts prepare the sacrifice to Apollo in words that echo Jason's instructions:

> "Τείως δ' αὖ καὶ βωμὸν ἐπάκτιον Ἐμβασίοιο
> θείομεν Ἀπόλλωνος ... ."
>
> (1.359–60)
>
> "Let us meanwhile build an altar
> of Apollo of Embarkation on the shore ... ."

Compare this with:

> νήεον αὐτόθι βωμὸν ἐπάκτιον Ἀπόλλωνος,
> Ἀκτίου Ἐμβασίοιό τ' ἐπώνυμον ... .
>
> (1.403–404)
>
> They built there an altar on the shore for Apollo,
> named for him as god of the Shore and of Embarkation ... .

---

[13] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 23.

Notice the repetition of *bômon epaktion*, "altar on the shore," *Embasioio*, "of Embarkation," and *Apollônos*, "of Apollo." This is characteristic of Homer and not often found in Apollonius.[14] Jason's instructions to the Argonauts are repeated in their actions, as reported by the words. The verbal echoes create a sense of religious unity among Jason, the heroes, and the narrator.

The heroes' journey begins as a reflection of the narrator's literary journey. These journeys are not identical, as words cannot be identical with deeds. In his account of the Argonauts' voyage, Pindar blurs the distinction when he seeks the Muse's inspiration. He asks for "winds of song" (*Pyth.* 4.3), an image that fits his nautical theme. Pindar, his Argonauts, and his patron, all sail for glory, poetic, heroic, and athletic. The narrator of our poem seems to journey with his heroes, but the poet draws parallels between the narrator and his characters that emphasize their separation from one another.

In the beginning, the reader is invited to join the narrator, Jason, and the Argonauts, who are themselves joined together in harmonious prayer. This apparent religious harmony is sustained in two similes that frame the Argonauts' worship of Apollo.[15] When Jason leaves home, he is likened to Apollo visiting one of his many sanctuaries:

> Ἦ καὶ ὁ μὲν προτέρωσε δόμων ἐξῶρτο νέεσθαι.
> Οἷος δ' ἐκ νηοῖο θυώδεος εἶσιν Ἀπόλλων
> Δῆλον ἀν' ἠγαθέην ἠὲ Κλάρον ἢ ὅ γε Πυθὼ
> ἢ Λυκίην εὐρεῖαν ἐπὶ Ξάνθοιο ῥοῇσι·
> τοῖος ἀνὰ πληθὺν δήμου κίεν . . . .
>
> (1.306–10)
>
> He spoke, and set out to go outside the house.
> Just as Apollo goes from his fragrant temple
> up through holy Delos, or Claros, or Pytho,
> or broad Lycia, on the streams of Xanthus,
> so did he move up through the press of the crowd . . . .

When the Argonauts set off on their journey, they are likened to dancers in one of Apollo's numerous sanctuaries:

> Οἱ δ', ὥς τ' ἠίθεοι Φοίβῳ χορὸν ἢ ἐνὶ Πυθοῖ
> ἤ που ἐν Ὀρτυγίῃ ἢ ἐφ' ὕδασιν Ἰσμηνοῖο
> στησάμενοι, φόρμιγγος ὑπαὶ περὶ βωμὸν ὁμαρτῇ

---

[14] Fränkel, *Noten*, 70–71. Other words and phrases from Jason's speech echoed in the ensuing narrative are θυέεσσι (353)—θυέων (437); δαῖτ' (354)—δαίτρευον (433); βόας (356)—βόε (407); ἀγέληθεν (356, 406); ἔσω ἁλός (357, 390); ἐρύσαιμεν (357)—ἐρύσσαι (382).

[15] Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius," 96–97; and Levin, *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 40, n. 1, with bibliography.

ἐμμελέως κραιπνοῖσι πέδον ῥήσσωσι πόδεσσιν·
ὣς οἱ ὑπ' Ὀρφῆος κιθάρῃ πέπληγον ἐρετμοῖς
πόντου λάβρον ὕδωρ .... .

(1.536–41)

But the rest, just as young men set up a dance for Phoebus
either in Pytho or in Ortygia, or by the waters of Ismenus,
and to the accompaniment of the lyre around the altar
beat the ground with their swift feet in time to the music,
so in time with Orpheus' lyre they smote with their oars
the rushing water of the sea .... .

The religious tone of the similes reinforces the sense that narrator and heroes are joined in worshipping Apollo, yet the wording reveals the separation between the parties.

In cult prayers, the list of shrines both flatters the deity and ensures the prayer is dispatched to the correct address. In Apollonius' similes the list of shrines and the ritual repetition ἤ ... ἤ ... ἤ, "or ... or ... or," create a religious tone that is thoroughly appropriate to the hymnic opening of the poem.[16] In the first simile, the birthplace of Apollo is called Delos; in the second, Ortygia. Ancient scholars disputed whether the name Ortygia meant Delos or somewhere else. According to a scholiast on Apollonius (at 1.419), Callimachus thought Ortygia meant Delos (cf. *H. Ap.* 2.59, *Ep.* 62.2, *Ait.* frag. 18.7). Therefore, Apollonius is presenting two points of view by using two names for the same island. His narrator calls the island Delos, but Jason (1.419) and the Argonauts know it as Ortygia. A similar distinction existed in Homeric epic, where, as Aristonicus recognized, characters used the name Ephyra for the town Homer called Corinth (Schol. at *Il.* 2.570). Apollonius uses two names for Delos because he wants to differentiate between narrator and heroes. When Jason leaves home, the narrator calls upon Apollo through the hymnic list of shrines. When the Argonauts leave Pagasae, they too are murmuring prayers to Apollo. The shift in nomenclature from Delos to Ortygia mirrors the divergence in point of view between the narrator's and the heroes'. As will be shown, the two parties will diverge on more momentous issues.

The prelude to the adventures of the Argonauts is expertly orchestrated as a hymn to Apollo. Narrator and heroes unite in a prayer that gives the poem formal beauty; but there are cracks in the Homeric façade. While the poet is at pains to give the appearance of harmony

---

[16] In the hymns, the connecting word is εἴτε, rather than ἤ. See Hermann Kleinknecht, *Die Gebetsparodie in der Antike*, Tübinger Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft, 28 (Stuttgart, 1937), 24–25, citing *Orphic Hymns* 42.5ff., 49.5ff., 55.15ff., and Theocritus *Id.* 1.122ff. The connective ἤ ... ἤ ... ἤ is used by Callimachus when he praises Artemis by listing the dancing places where she is honored (*H. Art.* 3.170–76).

between narrator and characters, he makes it clear that their interests do not coincide. Their welfare has been entrusted to a deity who rejects both heroic poetry and the deeds celebrated in such poetry.

The danger of Apollo's patronage is apparent in Jason's prayer. Like the narrator, Jason attributes the responsibility for the expedition to Apollo's oracle, but, ominously, Jason and the narrator mean different oracles.[17] The narrator refers to the oracle given to Pelias; Jason to the one he received himself. Jason does not know that Apollo's oracle underlies Pelias' desire for his death. At the same time, the god's prophecies prove destructive to the recipients. Medea will trick Pelias' daughters into dismembering their father and will kill Jason's sons.[18]

Apollo's other beneficiaries do not fare well in the *Argonautica*. He is mentioned three times in the catalogue of heroes as giving gifts that prove either useless or deadly. Mopsus and Idmon have received from him the art of prophecy, but are destined to die on the journey (1.79–85, 140–41). When they die, the poet remarks that their prophetic knowledge was useless (2.816–17; 4.1502–3). Listed after Mopsus in the catalogue are the sons of Eurytus, who was destroyed by the bow Apollo gave him (1.88–89). Despite the honor he receives from heroes and narrator, the god favors neither party.

The poet allows the Argonauts their separate points of view and even lets them express their dissatisfaction with events at various times. At the same time, he sets over them a narrator hostile to their dreams of grandeur. The literary landscape, in which their fates are determined, is Callimachean in minute detail. When the boat is launched—the first sight of the sea—the reader, recalling Callimachus' equation of the sea with epic poetry (*H. Ap.* 2.106), might wonder how the narrator will handle this medium. Before the Argonauts drag the Argo into the sea, they set their clothes on a rock once covered by water (1.364–66). At one time, therefore, the ocean was greater than it is now. The image of a shrunken ocean would later be used by Longinus (9.13). He likens the *Odyssey* to the sea at low tide in its lack of intensity in comparison to the *Iliad*. The values of epic poetry have evaporated since the days of Homeric heroes, the Argonauts' children. Traveling

---

[17] Fränkel, *Noten*, 73. Collins believes that Jason alludes in his prayer (1.412–14) to the oracle given to Pelias ("Studies," 39), but Jason has mentioned Apollo's favorable oracles to his mother (1.301–2) and to the Argonauts (1.360–62). Surely, Pelias would not have confided to Jason the reason for his uneasiness. Eichgrün argues that Jason was aware of Pelias' designs ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 87–89), but see below, p. 105.

[18] For dramatic irony from misunderstood prophecies, see George E. Duckworth, *Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Epics of Homer, Apollonius, and Vergil* (Princeton, 1933), 78; Collins, "Studies," 110; Levin, *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 14, 19.

on a smaller sea, the Argonauts display a shallow heroism.

After the Argo is launched, the narrator maps out the literary terrain in one of three similes that implicitly compare the ocean to dry land (1.536–41, 545–46, 575–79). The wake of the boat is compared to a white path, *atrapos*, stretching through a green field (1.545–46). The path of poetry is a well-trodden image since Homer's path of song.[19] The word *atrapos*, "small path," the image for the wake of the Argo, evokes Callimachean aesthetics.

Callimachus conceives of poetry as a path (*Ep.* 7.1–2, 28.1; *Ait.* frag. 1.27). Homer is the great highway, the chariot road Apollo forbids Callimachus to take (*Ait.* frag. 1.25; cf. Pindar, *Paean* frag. 7b, 11–18). The *atrapos* denotes the small path contrasted with the highway, *leôphoros hodos*.[20] As its name implies, the *atrapos* is a short cut, a direct path between two points; by implication, it is difficult to follow and not for everyone. In its brevity and difficulty, it is a perfect image for Callimachean poetics, and was so used by later writers. The contrast between the wine-drinkers and water-drinkers (i.e., Callimachus' followers) is set out by the path taken by each group. Antipater of Thessalonica, hostile to Callimachus (*A.P.* 11.20), contrasts the water-drinkers' *atrapos* with the road taken by drunkards (*A.P.* 11.23) and warns drunkards to beware the *atrapos* covered with water (*A.P.* 7.398). Another anti-Callimachean poet, Antipater of Sidon, uses Callimachus' own phrases to praise a poet Callimachus dislikes, Antimachus of Colophon (*A.P.* 7.409). In calling Antimachus' poem "clear" (τορόν) Antipater echoes Callimachus' criticism of Antimachus' *Lyde*, "not clear" (οὐ τορόν, frag. 398). In the same spirit presumably, Antipater praises Antimachus for walking the untrodden path, the *atrapos* (*A.P.* 7.409).[21] The Argo sails on, cutting a path through the sea, which like the Callimachean *atrapos* is small and difficult. The narrator gives us an elegant demonstration of the control he exercises over his medium. He can both shrink and shape the ocean to his own purposes.

The poet, in the meantime, has established the appearance of harmony as the narrator and characters cooperate in an animated hymn. Formally, all is well, but under the surface, irreconcilable world views threaten to make this something other than an adventure story. The Argonauts long to be Homer's larger-than-life heroes, but are

---

[19] Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, 103–11.

[20] Iambl. *Protr.* 21, in Diels-Kranz, Pythagoreische Schule C 6 (Vol. 1, 360, line 27). A similar word ἀτραπιτός, appears in Callimachus (*H. Del.* 4.74), but with no apparent literary meaning.

[21] For the Callimachean resonance of τορόν and ἄτριπτος, see A. S. F. Gow, and D. L. Page, *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams* (Cambridge, 1965), 11, 87. From Antipater's phrase, Pfeiffer reconstructed ἀτρίπτους at *Ait.* frag. 1.28.

trapped in a poem controlled by a Callimachean narrator. Though fathers to the mighty heroes of the *Iliad*, they travel an ocean shrunk since Homer's time, and are continually thwarted by literary theories that come into being a thousand years after their exploits.

The ideological difference between narrator and characters animates the poem and gives the heroes an independent life. When characters stand up against the invisible process of fiction, they take on an illusory reality. Since they view events differently from the way the narrator presents them, they seem to be as real as the narrator—and, indeed, they are. The same poet created both. By imagining the heroes as free-standing, we breathe life into the poet's world. As the worlds of narrative pull apart, an intellectual space is created, bounded by events and narrative. Into this space, as if it were three-dimensional, the characters grow.

The parallels Apollonius sets up between the story and the narrative, between the voyage of the Argonauts and his own poetic voyage, detach events from the words narrating those events. The reader's job is to recognize the divisions of the worlds, the wrenching apart of narrative, as narrator and characters try to move in opposite directions. The struggle of opposing styles, waged between narrator and characters, splits the story apart. From the beginning, the narrator is false to his heroes, but he cannot control their opinions. Watching the conflict between narrator and heroes, the reader sees the poem come alive.

CHAPTER FOUR

HERACLES AND JASON

Traveling on a small ocean, the heroes of the *Argonautica* are ordinary men. Heracles, who towers over them all, gives the reader a sense of relative size. The Argo, which accommodates the other heroes, is too small for him. It bobs down under his feet when he steps aboard (1.531–33).[1] Because his statues ranged from colossal to miniature, the viewer's perspective on Heracles was constantly changing. Huge statues portrayed him as he appeared to mortals; tiny statues showed how he looked to the gods in heaven.[2] Experienced in placing Heracles in proportion to their own world, the readers of the *Argonautica* could imagine him relative to their own size and the size of the Argonauts, ordinary people with minor flaws.

A survivor from a primitive era, Heracles was always identified by a lion's skin and club. In art and in drama, in an exalted pose or a comic one, he was defined by his costume. In Euripides, the hero boasted that he had slipped inconspicuously into town (*Heracles* 598), when he was

---

[1] For studies of Jason and Heracles, see Beye, "Jason as Love-hero," 31–55, and his *Epic and Romance*, 77–99; Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius," 99–125; Collins, "Studies," *passim*; Gilbert Lawall, "Apollonius' *Argonautica*," 121–69; Donald N. Levin, "Apollonius' Heracles," *CJ*, 67 (1971), 22–28, and his *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, *passim*; Herter, "Apollonios der Epiker," 35–38. Eichgrün puts his finger on the problem when he says that Jason's achievement gives one no sense of accomplishment ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 92–93). For criticisms of Jason's insipidity, see Carspecken, 99–102 (with bibliography); Theodore M. Klein, "Apollonius Rhodius, *Vates Ludens*: Eros' Golden Ball (*Arg.* 3.113–150)," *CW*, 74 (1981), 225–27. Carspecken supplants Jason as the central hero with the entire crew of Argonauts, among whom he plays a part (110–25). Lawall restores Jason to the central position and dubs him an anti-hero, for whom the real hero, Heracles, acts as a foil (121–69). This view is extended by Beye, who calls the *Argonautica* an anti-epic, into which Jason, colorless and insignificant, fits quite comfortably as the hero with an ἀρετή of sexual attractiveness ("Jason as Love-hero," 31–55). Some have attempted to turn Jason into the kind of hero worth reading about: Collins, "Studies"; Clauss, *The Best of The Argonauts*; and Richard L. Hunter, ""Short on Heroics': Jason in the *Argonautica*," *CQ*, 38 (1988), 436–53. Collins, Hunter, and Clauss go too far in their zealous defense of Jason (below, nn. 9, 13).

[2] For statues of Heracles Epitrapezius, both miniature and colossal, see J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge, 1986), 50–51, and Onians, *Art and Thought in the Hellenistic Age*, 125–26. For the immediate recognition of Heracles from his club and lion skin, see Sir Arthur Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, 2d ed., rev. John Gould and D. M. Lewis (Oxford, 1968), 186–87 and fig. 49.

dressed as inappropriately for mythological Thebes as for Wall Street today. In Aristophanes' *Frogs*, Dionysus disguised himself as Heracles by draping the hero's costume over his yellow pajamas (*Frogs* 45–47). The costume was distinguished from the role when the wearer of yellow pajamas showed himself under the lion's skin. The bond between costume and role further disintegrated when Dionysus and his slave tossed Heracles' costume back and forth, as its wearer was variously invited to a feast or threatened with torture (*Frogs* 494–673).

The difference between a man's appearance and his true nature was emphasized in epic and in drama. Paris of the *Iliad* and the suitors of the *Odyssey* were handsome, but not heroic. Euripides' Medea lamented that she did not see through Jason's beauty to the man beneath (*Med.* 516–19). Her remark had greater force for the original audience than for a reader: the actor playing Jason wore a mask. Surface was distinct from reality in drama, where an actor could play different roles in the same play (cf. Lucian, *Menippus* 16). The beauty of the narrator's Jason is, finally, skin deep.[3] Apollonius uses an almost surgical precision to separate the central hero from heroic qualities.

The *Iliad* revolves around Achilles; the *Odyssey*, around Odysseus. The first book of the *Argonautica* has two centers in Heracles and Jason, heroes of contrasting costumes. The lion's skin and the cloak define their wearers as primitive or civilized, manly or effeminate.[4] The contrast between Heracles and Jason parallels the one between Homer and Apollonius. The heroes' rivalry brings to the surface the conflict between the narrator and his characters. In their zeal for a proper epic adventure, the Argonauts elect as leader Heracles, a most appropriate figurehead for an epic poem. The Callimachean narrator gets rid of Heracles, who would have changed the poem into a heroic tale, and imposes Jason on them.

Jason is set apart from the others as special, without having any solid qualities. When he goes down to the beach to join the Argonauts, he is compared to Apollo (1.307–10). Homeric heroes are compared to gods, and so, it seems, Jason must be the hero of an epic poem. Yet, the timing is deliberately off. Such a simile is effective only when the character has achieved something worthy of note. Thus, much later in the poem, when Aeetes is compared to Poseidon (3.1240–45), the

---

[3] Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius," 100; Collins, "Studies," 109–10.

[4] In the two halves of the catalogue (one headed by Orpheus, the other by Heracles); the last of the Argonauts to arrive (one in a cloak, one in an animal skin); Idmon and Idas (prophet and swaggering warrior); Tiphys and Heracles (skill and strength); Polydeuces and Amycus, skill and cloak vs. brute power in an animal skin (*The Best of the Argonauts*), 29–34, 68, 92–93.

reader will have already seen him as the formidable master of his house, the traditional king, and the dread father of Medea. His authority is heightened by the comparison with Poseidon. In contrast, the Apollo-simile makes Jason look absurd because it has no basis. So far, Jason has merely said good-bye to his mother.[5] Moreover, the list of Apollo's sanctuaries connected by the repeated ἤ ... ἤ ... ἤ, "or ... or ... or," gives the simile a tone of prayer—discordant with the fanfare of a heroic departure. While seeming to praise Jason by comparing him to a god, the narrator actually ruins his entrance by muttering prayers nervously beneath his breath.

Immediately after the simile, Jason is approached by the priestess of Artemis (1.311–13). His godlike aura hangs about him for a moment while she honors him, but, before he can hear what she says, he is pulled away by the crowd. Jason will often be compared to Agamemnon in the poem, and the scene with the priestess evolves as a parody of the first scene of the *Iliad*. There, Agamemnon drives off the priest of Apollo, *arêtêr*, who has come to ransom his daughter (*Il.* 1.11). Drifting along with the crowd, Jason cannot stop and talk to the priestess, *arêteira* (1.312), of Apollo's sister.[6] Jason's impotence is contrasted to Agamemnon's fierce brutality. Lacking both the flaws and the greatness of his Homeric model, Jason dwindles from a god to a helpless young man in ten lines.

When Jason arrives at the beach, the narrator continues to deconstruct the heroic image, in a parody of the Homeric entrance scene.[7] Jason approaches; the Argonauts are gathered facing him; then suddenly Acastus and Argus appear, one wearing a fine cloak, the other an animal skin (1.321–28). The Argonauts are distracted from Jason as they wonder how Acastus and Argus managed to slip away from Pelias (1.327–28). The reader is distracted by the details of their clothing, which sustains the thematic contrast between the civilized Jason and the rough-hewn Heracles (1.324–26).[8] Jason is thrust from the lime-

---

[5] Moreover, a simile implicitly compares Jason to a nurse a few lines before (1.268–75). With no secure identity, Jason is decked out in the costume of nurse or deity by the narrator's whim.

[6] Bulloch finds an echo of the same Iliadic scene in the meeting of Erysichthon and Demeter disguised as a priestess (Callimachus, *H. Dem.* 6.42) because, according to Aristotle (*Poet.* 1457b33–35), the word ἀρητήρ was Homer's coinage ("Callimachus' *Erysichthon*," 103–4). In the scenes described by Homer and Callimachus, the situations are similar: an arrogant ruler defies an emissary of deity. Clauss points out that the meeting presages the unlucky relationships Jason will have with women (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 95–97).

[7] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 82–83.

[8] Levin, *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 43–44; Amy R. Rose, "Clothing Imagery in Apollonius's *Argonautika*," *QUCC*, 50 (1985), 30. Clauss points out a

light, upstaged by the late arrival of the last two members named in the catalogue.

When Jason finally gets the attention of his comrades and invites them to choose the best man as their leader, they unanimously choose Heracles. Their enthusiasm goes beyond rejecting Jason, whom they do not even seem to have considered. In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon's authority as commander rests on the fact that the Achaeans assemble to honor him (*Il.* 1.158–59). Coming just after Agamemnon's authority has been challenged and restored, the catalogue of ships in Book 2 of the *Iliad* serves to mark the reaffirmation of his power. The warriors have been brought to acknowledge his authority once more. Although the heroes of Apollonius' catalogue have come to help Jason (e.g., Palaemonius, 1.205–6), they are free agents, uncommitted to him. A reader senses that the connotative meanings of the simile and the catalogue have given stature to Jason, but poetic stratagems are invisible to the Argonauts, who do not consider Jason an appropriate leader. They ignore him even when assembled ostensibly in his honor. Any residual power of the Apollo-simile has been dissipated. If Jason's comrades cannot see his resemblance to a god, the reader need not believe it.[9]

From the point of view within the poem, Heracles holds the central position.[10] He is the central Argonaut of the catalogue. When the list of men comes to life, he sits at their center (1.342). Before they set off, the Argonauts assign him to the center rowing-bench (1.396–97, 531). Thus, he is consistently presented as having an equal number of Argonauts stretching out on either side. Within the story, he is the central hero.

Jason does not take command because of his inherent superiority to the other heroes or to any other hero. His insignificance is underscored when he is given the title of commander by the man the Argonauts have unanimously chosen to lead them.[11] Better-skilled in heroic etiquette

---

further distraction in that the reader would know stories that Pelias tried to get the two young men to sabotage the boat (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 61). Carspecken points out that the catalogue becomes part of the action, and he therefore objects to the late appearances of Acastus and Argus, which, he thinks, ruin the illusion ("Apollonius Rhodius," 57). Apollonius, however, prepares the reader for their delayed arrival by presenting them at the end of the catalogue as on the verge of departure.

[9] Clauss and Hunter distort the scene by calling it an election (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 59, 61; "'Short on Heroics,'" 445).

[10] As Hurst points out (*Manière et cohérence*, 47–48), Heracles owes his central position to the absences of Theseus and Peirithous, both named as not being present (1.101–4). Collins notes that whereas all the other Argonauts are assigned rowing benches according to lot, they give Heracles the central seat by acclamation ("Studies," 37–38).

[11] When Apollonius makes Heracles more impressive by keeping him seated during his refusal, he may be "correcting" the Homeric scene, where Agamemnon does not rise

than his companions, Heracles refuses the role. He insists the man who assembled the group should lead it:

> "Αὐτὸς ὅ τις ξυνάγειρε καὶ ἀρχεύοι ὁμάδοιο." (1.347)
>
> "May whoever assembled this company also lead it himself."

Jason's appointment as leader does not relate to his inner qualities, but is based on his being the one to bring the group together, on external forces rather than internal.

The ancient contrast of *physis*, "nature," and *nomos*, "convention," is demonstrated by the contrasting heroes. Heracles holds the center by natural right. He is the best of the Greeks, just as, in their respective epic poems, Achilles and Odysseus are called the best of the Greeks.[12] Jason is placed in the center by convention, because of the rhetorical devices of epic poetry as they are manipulated by the narrator. He resembles Agamemnon who was placed above Achilles, a better man. The difference is poignant because Jason is appointed commander by the man his comrades prefer.

The narrator shows his hand when, for Jason's first official act, he prays to Apollo, the Callimachean god of poetry, with the words of the Callimachean Jason:

> "ἄλλα δὲ Πυθοῖ
> ἄλλα δ' ἐς 'Ορτυγίην ἀπερείσια δῶρα κομίσσω." (1.418–19)
>
> "I shall bring gifts
> innumerable, some to Pytho, others to Ortygia."

Just before the voyage begins, Jason echoes the words of Callimachus'

---

to answer Achilles during the reconciliation (*Il.* 19.76–77). See the discussions of Marchinus van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad*, Part 1 (Leiden, 1963), 582; Walter Arend, *Die Typischen Scenen bei Homer* (Berlin, 1933), 117–18; and Clauss, *The Best of the Argonauts*, 64–65.

According to Nicander (frag. 48 Schneider), Heracles was in charge of the expedition. By weaving the rivalry of Jason and Heracles into the story, Apollonius creatively combines variant traditions of the myth; see Moses Hadas, "Apollonius Called the Rhodian," *CW*, 26 (1932), 44; and Vian, *Argonautiques I*, 14. For a summary of the legends connecting Heracles with the Argonauts' expedition, see Fuchs, "Die Hylasgeschichte," 25–27. Händel notes that Apollonius combines variant traditions, *Beobachtungen zur epischen Technik des Apollonios Rhodios*, Zetemata 7 (Munich, 1954), 18, 45, 55–56, 64.

[12] Gregory Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore, 1979), 26–41. For the tradition that Heracles was the best of men, see the discussion of Gilbert Murray, "Heracles, 'The Best of Men,'" *Greek Studies* (Oxford, 1946), 106–26, where he examines this traditional view of Heracles in Sophocles (*Heracles* 183; *Trachiniae* 811), and Aristophanes (*Clouds* 1049).

Jason, uttered at the voyage's end:

πολλὰ δ' ἀπείλει
ἐς Πυθὼ πέ]μψειν, πολλὰ δ' ἐς 'Ορτυγίην ....
(*Ait.* frag. 1.18.6–7)

He promised to send many things
to Pytho and many things to Ortygia ....

Beginning where Callimachus' Jason leaves off, the narrator's Jason continues to exhibit the lack of substance appropriate for a Callimachean hero. He is helpless when Idas abuses him before everyone.

Between dinner and sleep, the heroes pass the time in true epic fashion by telling their adventures (1.450–59). The *Odyssey* is full of such after-dinner stories; in many of them, Odysseus is the narrator (e.g., Books 9–12, 14.191–359, 454–506). The parallel with the *Odyssey* makes the reader wonder what Jason, the hero of this poem, is saying. Odysseus' ability to fascinate an audience contrasts sharply with Jason's silence:

Ἔνθ' αὖτ' Αἰσονίδης μὲν ἀμήχανος εἰν ἑοῖ αὐτῷ
πορφύρεσκεν ἕκαστα, κατηφιόωντι ἐοικώς ....
(1.460–61)

There, however, Jason, helpless, within himself
pondered everything in detail, like a man cast down ....

Far from being the center of attention, Jason sits alone, quietly brooding.[13] The adjective *amêchanos*, "helpless" (1.460), shows the contrast between Jason and the *polymêchanos*, "resourceful," Odysseus. Anyone who has attended a party with nothing to add to the conversation can empathize with the helpless, brooding Jason. At this point, his one exploit has been to cross a mountain stream (1.8–11). Even if the reader adds what is mentioned later (3.66–73), that he performed this feat

[13] Collins interprets his silence as thoughtfulness and distress at the Argonauts' failure to recognize his profound sense of responsibility ("Studies," 41–42). This he deduces from Jason's speech where he claims to lie awake at night worrying about the safety of his comrades (2.631–37). By the time Jason makes this rhetorical claim in Book 2, however, the reader has seen him sleep peacefully at Cyzicus, where the population has reason to be hostile (1.1090–91). Collins claims that ἀμήχανος, "helpless," does not always characterize Jason, that sometimes he is called ἀρήιος, "warlike" (43–44). Jason, however, is called ἀρήιος only twice: when he has been humiliated by the Argonauts' rejection (1.349) and when he belatedly joins the attack on the Bebrycians (2.122). Hunter points out that Homeric heroes too are shown as giving way to helpless despair, but his examples—Odysseus trapped in the Cyclops' cave, or ordered to visit Hades (*Od.* 9.295, 10.496–500)—contrast sharply with Jason's situation here or when he hears the conditions imposed by Aeetes for taking the Fleece ("'Short on Heroics,'" 439). Being insulted at dinner, even by Aeetes, cannot compare with being locked in a cave by a hungry Cyclops or being sent to Hell.

with an aged lady on his back, this is not the kind of story to boast of among heroes. His exploit, well within the powers of a normal man, is ridiculous when compared to the deeds of Heracles, or of any other hero deserving the name.

With ruthless clarity, the narrator focuses attention on Jason's conversational inadequacy by the sudden attack of Idas, who, in front of everyone, noisily asks Jason the reason for his silence (1.462–65). Such a breach of civility is unthinkable in Homer under normal circumstances.[14] When greatly provoked, Achilles insults Agamemnon (*Il.* 1.225–44), but no one would casually ask another hero whether his silence indicated scheming or sheer terror. Idas' rudeness undermines Jason's authority with his comrades. The scene resembles the ones where Odysseus endures the suitors' abuse in his own palace, but the resemblance is perverse. Jason is among friends, heroes even. Yet he is out of place among them, just as the hero Odysseus is out of place among the suitors. A goose among eagles, Jason continues to be overshadowed by members of his crew.

Without being mentioned, Heracles dominates the scene. Of the heroes present, he is the most competent to play Odysseus' role of hero-narrator. Although presented as performing deeds rather than narrating them, Heracles, who has killed monsters since the cradle, who slew the Nemean lion, who captured the Erymanthian boar, who won the girdle of Hippolyta, who chased away the Stymphalian birds, and who slew the Hydra (1.126–29, 2.778–79, 2.1052–57, 4.1404), will be the best prepared when heroes assemble to listen to one another's stories. That Heracles does not speak in this scene only makes his presence more oppressive. Without being named, he overshadows Jason, who is so negligible as to be mocked in public by the second-rate Idas.

The next morning, when the Argonauts set out on their voyage of exploration and adventure, Jason is shown in tears (1.534–35). His depression contrasts with the joyous mood of departure, when the Argonauts rowing in time with Orpheus' lyre are compared to dancers in one of Apollo's festivals (1.536–41). This simile evokes the one in which Jason, compared to Apollo, sets out to join his comrades. Taken together, the two similes imply the Argonauts' relationship to Jason is like that of worshipers; but knowledge of Jason's insignificance changes the second simile into an ironic comment on the first.[15] The events

---

[14] Beye has argued that Idas is trying sincerely, though ineptly, to raise Jason's morale (*Epic and Romance*, 85).

[15] For the opinion that Jason's prestige is enhanced by the combination of the two similes, see Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius;" Levin, *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 40, n. 1; and Clauss, *The Best of the Argonauts*, 95.

following the first simile have shown how little Jason resembles a god, especially in the opinion of his comrades. The following chapters will give many examples of the way Apollonius uses a glittering surface to contrast with a lugubrious reality.

Jason is the hero without heroic qualities. As the *Argonautica* is formally, and only formally, an epic, so Jason is graced with a hero's beauty, which his comrades do not notice, and with the narrator's adornments, which they cannot see. For the Argonauts, for the narrator, and for the reader—a rare instance of accord among these parties—Heracles is the best man. Perversely, Jason, the ostensible hero of the poem, acts as his foil.

We accept Jason's leadership through our intellectual grasp of narrative rather than from emotional commitment to him as a character.[16] He commands the expedition; he does the labor assigned by Aeetes; he wins the Fleece; and he marries the girl. Jason's success is meaningless because he does the labor with the aid of a witch, wins a prize that brings him no benefit, and marries a girl who despises him. He is the hero who lacks heroic qualities who succeeds without effort or benefit. The reader knows Jason is the central hero because the narrator compares him to Apollo (1.307–10) and describes his god-made cloak (1.721–67). Such devices of narrative are woven into a glittering web highlighting the dullness of the wearer. They seem to establish Jason's central position, but the narrator reverses the expectations these devices arouse in the reader's mind. Instead of highlighting Jason, they highlight his lack of heroism.

All the other characters have skills or character traits that make them stand out from the rest. Idmon is a seer; Idas, a drunken bully; Telamon, a loyal friend; Polydeuces, a skilled boxer; and the Boreads have wings. Only Jason is undefined. Yet the narrator holds a lamp above his head, as it were, so the reader sees more clearly that nothing is there. He is brought into prominence to be ignored by his companions, reviled by Idas and Telamon, seduced by Hypsipyle, and generally made to look ridiculous. Jason is given the position of central hero only through the deliberately mocking devices of narrative, which, like his appointment as commander, prove to be tinsel. As commander, Jason will perform certain acts that go with the office, such as sleeping with the queen of Lemnos and killing the king of Cyzicus. His reason for accepting the mission in the first place is obscure. To explain his motivation would give his character too much definition.

Inferior to his followers, Jason does not appear to advantage in the

[16] Beye, "Jason as Love-hero," 36–38.

Argonauts' first important stopover, on Lemnos. This episode richly anticipates the themes and adventures developed in the rest of the poem. There is much to explore here, where each of the poem's treasures is found or anticipated. At this point, I will examine only how Jason and Heracles acquit themselves in this first test.

Lemnos was notorious in mythology as the place where the women had massacred the men. The "Lemnian evil" was proverbial for catastrophe.[17] Aeschylus and Sophocles both wrote tragedies about the Argonauts' stay on Lemnos.[18] Aristophanes also wrote an account. Very little of the play remains, but it seems to have been contemporaneous with his *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*.[19] The man-slayers of tragedy were probably presented by Aristophanes as similar to his other powerful women in being delightful, competent, and rational. In Apollonius' treatment too, the demonic, tragic women presented by the narrator vanish, to be replaced by women of the sort created by Aristophanes, as the battle changes from military to erotic.

The Argonauts arrive on the island a year after the massacre. By this time, the women have settled comfortably into a new life. They enjoy performing men's duties, which have superseded their former chores. The only shadow over their lives is fear of an attack from Thrace. Expecting invasion, they rush to the shore at the Argonauts' arrival, prepared to do battle. After it becomes clear that the newcomers are harmless, the women return to their city and hold an assembly to determine policy concerning the strangers.

Like the followers of Lysistrata and Praxinoe in Aristophanes'

---

[17] Aeschylus, *Choe.* 631–34; Zenobius, *Centuria* 4.91.

[18] There was a tradition that the Argonauts and the Lemnian women originally met for combat (Wendel, *Scholia*, at 1.769). Both Aeschylus (frags. 247–48 Nauck and Snell) and Sophocles (frags. 384–89 Pearson) wrote tragedies about the Argonauts' stay on Lemnos. According to the scholiast on Apollonius, in Sophocles' version, the two parties actually fought before making love.

[19] Franz Stoessl, *Apollonios Rhodios: Interpretationen zur Erzählungskunst und Quellenverwertung* (Bern, 1941), 40. For the fragments of Aristophanes' *Lemnian Women*, see John N. Edmonds, *The Fragments of Attic Comedy*, Vol. I (Leiden, 1957), frags. 356–75. Edmonds guesses that the play was produced shortly after the *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae* because of frag. 367, alluding to Dorillus, known to have been in Athens around then, and frag. 368, alluding to the Thracian goddess Bendis, imported to Athens at the dramatic date of Plato's *Republic*. It is possible to suggest, however speculatively, that Aristophanes' *Lemnian Women* might have resembled the *Lysistrata* and *Thesmophoriazusae*, both of which exploit the humorous possibilities of women's ability to perform men's duties. Edward V. George finds panic and disorder in the women's behavior in the *Argonautica*, because of the notice that they look nervously toward Thrace (1.630–32; "Poet and Characters in Apollonius Rhodius' Lemnian Episode," *Hermes*, 100 [1972], 53–55). This is mentioned, however, by the unreliable narrator, who has presented these delightful women as frenzied. Vian suggests that the poet mixes tragic and comic elements (*Argonautiques I*, 25–28).

comedies, the women of Lemnos are humorous in their competence at traditionally male activities. The heroic parallel fades away, however, when the nurse recommends that the women take the Argonauts to bed. If they grow old without children, she argues, who will yoke the oxen, plow the fields, sow the seeds, and reap the harvest?

Working the earth is an ancient and universal metaphor for sexual intercourse. "There are other furrows for him to plow," Creon says, dismissing Antigone's engagement to his son (*Ant.* 569).[20] A sexual meaning underlies the nurse's words: the women and the fields need to be plowed and seeded. Using the same metaphor, Hypsipyle offers both her body and her plowland to Jason (1.828–31). The metaphor continues to the end of the episode, when Heracles asks how long the men will plow the rich soil of Lemnos and suggests that Jason fertilize the island all by himself (1.868, 873–74). The allusions to plowing in the Lemnian episode parody Jason's great achievement. For his labor assigned by the cruel King Aeetes, Jason will plow the field, sow the dragon's teeth, and reap the harvest of men growing up. The women need to be impregnated to replace the crop of men they cut down the year before.[21]

Other aspects of the Argonauts' first adventure offer an ironic view of the sort of heroism we can expect of Jason. When the battle between the Argonauts and the women—one that could hardly have brought military distinction to the heroes—is changed to seduction, the Argonauts lose. The episode reverses the stereotypical male victory over a woman in bed.

Jason enters the city with epic fanfare. His *aretê*, "heroism," consists of attractiveness to women; his richly embroidered cloak is an erotic version of Achilles' shield.[22] As an erotic warrior, he should storm the town of maidens and vanquish their queen's virginity. Misled by the grandeur of Jason's entrance, in his dazzling cloak compared to a brilliant star (1.774–81; cf. Achilles, *Il.* 22.26–31), scholars have

---

[20] Pindar, *Pyth.* 4.255; Aeschylus, *Seven against Thebes* 753–54; Sophocles, *Oedipus* 1257, 1497; *Antigone* 569. Beye, "Jason as Love-hero," 44, points out the sexual symbolism of plowing in this episode.

[21] Clauss interprets the joyous bee simile that attends the distress of the Lemnian women at the departure of their lovers as hinting at their success in being impregnated by them (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 140–42).

[22] For the transformation of the battle into the *militia amoris*, see Wendel, *Scholia*, at 1.721–22, where it is pointed out that Jason wears an erotic cloak instead of military armor. See Beye, "Jason as Love-hero," 43–44; Lawall, "Jason as Anti-Hero," 158. For the *militia amoris* in Greek poetry, see P. Murgatroyd, "*Militia Amoris* and the Roman Elegists," *Latomus*, 34 (1975), 60–65. For Apollonius to change a battle into a *militia amoris* is consistent with his fondness for reconciling variant traditions, noticed by Händel (above, n. 11).

believed that Hypsipyle falls as violently in love with the hero as Medea.[23] The warrior of love storms the woman's heart as a real warrior storms a city. The frequent mention of *pylai*, "gates," and of Hypsipyle's name, "high gate," reminds the reader that a potential *Iliad* has been changed into a *paraclausithyron*, a song sung by a locked-out lover.[24] According to convention, the lover urges the woman to open the door. On Lemnos, the door is open and the lady inside calls impatiently, "Stranger, why do you just sit for so long outside the gates?" (1.793–94). In addition to plowing and warfare, the woman has taken the male prerogative of initiating a love affair. In turn, Jason plays the part of innocence, deceived by lies and sexually exploited. Only in his eventual departure does he resemble the gallant seducer.

Jason's sexual attractiveness, however brilliant, is irrelevant. The women have made a national decision to go to bed with the Argonauts. His entry has all the pomp and circumstance of the Apollo-simile. He steps into town with the confidence of a hero, albeit an erotic hero, to meet a queen who has coolly resolved to sleep with him, "whoever" he may be (1.704). The women's victory is effortless. The reversal of roles implicit in their assumption of masculine chores continues in their appreciative—and no doubt audible—reception of Jason (1.783–84).[25] He follows Iphinoe to the palace with downcast eyes, like a maiden (1.784–85). Even the cloak, the emblem of his erotic heroism, emphasizes Jason's loss of male initiative. A handiwork of Athena (1.721, 768), it represents an occupation these women have outgrown (1.629).

When Hypsipyle explains to Jason the absence of men on the island, she changes the story. The men, she claims, infatuated with Thracian slave women, have been locked out of the city until they learn to behave (1.822). Jason accepts this explanation, even though no male population has ever allowed itself to be locked out of town. To be sure, Hypsipyle and the Lemnian women do not mean harm to the Argonauts. Yet, having overpowered and slain the men who used to live on Lemnos, they are potentially dangerous. In Book 3, Jason will entrust his fortunes to a woman, with disastrous results.[26] Now, however,

---

[23] See Wendel, *Scholia* at 1.781a; G. Zanker, "The Love Theme in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*," *WS*, 92 (1979), 54; Clauss, *The Best of the Argonauts*, 131, 135. Beye rejects this idea (*Epic and Romance*, 92–93).

[24] Πύλαι, "gates," 1.634, 782, 786, 844. For the *paraclausithyron* in Hellenistic times, see Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1, 574. This was to become a popular theme in Roman love poetry, for which, see F. O. Copley, *Exclusus Amator: A Study in Latin Love Poetry*, Philological Monographs of the A.P.A., Vol. 17 (Baltimore, 1956).

[25] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 90–91.

[26] For the similarity between Medea and Hypsipyle, see Clauss, *The Best of the*

having led his men into the arms of killers, Jason quickly abandons the journey in favor of its unexpected pleasures.

When the Argonauts have lingered too long on the island, Heracles is revealed as the one with real authority. Calling the men to order, he destroys any semblance of authority Jason might be imagined to have (1.865–74). The situation and the opening of Heracles' speech evoke the scene where Odysseus' crew protested his long dalliance with Circe (*Od.* 10.469–74). Heracles calls his comrades *daimonioi*, "strange men" (1.865); Odysseus' crew called Odysseus, *daimonie*, "strange man" (*Od.* 10.472). In both situations, the commander is called to order by a subordinate, but the differences are significant. In the *Odyssey*, only Odysseus enjoyed the sexual favors of his hostess; in the *Argonautica*, only Heracles and a select few reject erotic entanglements (1.855–56). In the *Odyssey*, the crew addresses its complaint directly to Odysseus; Heracles bypasses Jason and addresses the crew with the plural, *daimonioi*. By referring to Jason contemptuously in the third person, Heracles relegates him to the position of a lesser Argonaut. Unnecessary for the quest, Jason is superfluous to the story of which he is traditionally the hero.

Of course, according to the traditional story, Jason must win Medea over and thereby gain the potions, do the labor, and win the Fleece. At this moment, however, there is no indication that the story will take this course.[27] The characters within the story, unaware of the myth, can be imagined as cheerfully abandoning Jason on Lemnos and following Heracles to Colchis. By presenting the Argonauts' point of view fairly, Apollonius creates the illusion that events are driven by their own momentum, that they do not follow a predestined course. He invites the reader to imagine for a moment the possibility that Jason might stay on Lemnos. For eleven lines after Heracles' speech, it is not clear that Jason is among the Argonauts who obey Heracles' command so promptly (1.875–85). He is given the opportunity to abdicate from his own story—a course he would have been wise to follow, considering the consequences of his success.

A second epic model for Heracles' reproach is Thersites' speech, in Book 2 of the *Iliad*.[28] After Agamemnon's test of their spirit, when the Greeks rush to the ships, Homer introduces the possibility that the army might just go home. Such a sudden end of the story must have startled the audience that looked forward to many nights of story-telling. Of

---

Argonauts, 96.

[27] Fusillo notes that Apollonius treats his poem as though it were a "work in progress" (*Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 384).

[28] Vian notices the echo (*Argonautiques I*, 91).

course, it is a common technique of storytellers to arouse an anxiety that they might stop narrating. When Odysseus tells his story to the Phaeacians, he breaks off at the most exciting part, in the middle of Hades (*Od.* 11.330–32), but the Phaeacians persuade him to continue his story. In the *Iliad*, Odysseus brings the soldiers back to the assembly and overpowers Thersites, who is urging them to return home. Thersites has an ignoble aim—to end the war and, consequently to end the *Iliad*, the poem about the war. Therefore, Homer makes him contemptible: ugly (*Il.* 2.216–19), despised by the best men Achilles and Odysseus (*Il.* 2.220), and ridiculed by the army (*Il.* 2.215–16, 270). Even though Thersites' reproofs to Agamemnon are justified, his low rank robs them of any real force.

Thersites and Heracles make much of the sexual interest of the commander (*Il.* 2.232; *Arg.* 1.872–74). Both suggest that the Greeks should sail off and leave him there (using a form of the verb ἐάω, "allow"). Heracles' contemptuous allusion to Jason, τὸν δ', "this man," echoes Thersites' τόνδε. Comparison of the two passages reveals their similarities:

> "Οἴκαδέ περ σὺν νηυσὶ νεώμεθα, τόνδε δ' ἐῶμεν
> αὐτοῦ ἐνὶ Τροίῃ γέρα πεσσέμεν ... ."
> (*Il.* 2.236–37)
>
> "Let us sail home with our ships and leave this man
> here in Troy to batten on his spoils ... ."
>
> "Ἴομεν αὖτις ἕκαστοι ἐπὶ σφεά· τὸν δ' ἐνὶ λέκτροις
> Ὑψιπύλης εἰᾶτε πανήμερον ... ."
> (*Arg.* 1.872–73)
>
> "Let us each go home; leave this man
> all day in Hypsipyle's bed ..."

Thersites urges the cast of characters to leave the scene of action and go home; when Heracles urges his comrades to leave, he convinces them to return to the story. In Homer, the question is whether the Trojan War and its poem should continue. Here, that issue is decided. The show will go on, with or without Jason. If Jason leaves the story, nothing of him will remain except the Apollo-simile, the cloak, and the catalogue floating on the surface of epic poetry. Possessing the ability and temperament of a hero, Heracles sits squarely in the center of the boat. Thersites and Odysseus' crew are subordinate to their commanders. Heracles too has a subordinate position, but his subordination is only formal. Unlike Thersites, the worst of the Greeks (*Il.* 2.216), Heracles is an aristocrat, and more, the best of the Greeks. His words have power. The ironic echoes show the superficiality of Jason's authority.

Like a soap-bubble, he is held together by the surface tension of a

brilliant exterior over inner emptiness. Often brought into prominence, he never reveals any quality that would arouse attention. In contrast to Odysseus, who as *Outis*, "Nobody," blinds the Cyclops, and as a nobody, a beggar, kills his wife's suitors, Jason is repeatedly called *hotis*, "whoever." Lacking character, he has only a role. Because he has assembled the Argonauts, he is their leader; as their leader, in that role he becomes the lover of Hypsipyle (1.347, 704). The reader, who cannot see Jason's beauty on a page, experiences it in the intellectual perfection of his form. The narrator reveals the shallowness of Jason's heroism in every scene, where he is out of his depth in typically Homeric situations. In turn, the reader who participates with the narrator in creating the hero is committed to the view that Jason is well-constructed, but not real.

On Lemnos, it seemed that Jason could be detached from the story and that his loss would not make any major change. Instead, it is Heracles who will be left behind. The stories of antithetical heroes are incompatible; the poem can no longer revolve around two centers. By ousting Heracles at the end of the first book, the narrator makes a literary statement: the *Argonautica* is not a tale in which an epic hero can thrive—it is not, in fact, a true epic. Yet the violent departure of its only heroic character, Heracles, leaves a huge hole in the center of the poem.

For their first adventure, the Argonauts go to bed with women. Their second adventure, on the island of Cyzicus, seems to fit better with one's idea of an epic poem because the heroes fight two battles. Both battles, however, are absurd, one grimly so. Their stay on Cyzicus begins peacefully. The inhabitants receive the heroes hospitably, and King Cyzicus, although newly wed and awaited by his bride, has dinner with them. The Argonauts ask about the area, but he can tell them nothing. The next day, a party of Argonauts sets out to climb Mount Dindymum to get a view of what lies ahead, while the younger Argonauts stay with Heracles by the boat (1.985–1011).

Suddenly from all sides the Gegenes leap down, blocking the harbor to attack the heroes. They are twelve-armed giants (1.944–46), raised by Hera for the special purpose of making trouble for Heracles (1.996–97). This piece of information leads the reader to expect that Heracles alone will save the ship and that his saga will now include victory over the Gegenes.[29] While he fights the giants single-handedly in glorious egotistical combat, his comrades return from the mountain to ruin his

[29] This was noticed by Stoessl, *Apollonios Rhodios*, 16–17. He believes that Apollonius depended too closely on his source and goes on to commend Valerius Flaccus, whose version of the story is superior because of its independence of local history (23).

exploit with their unnecessary, unwanted assistance. The story is spoiled by too many heroes. By coming back, the Argonauts turn what should have been a glorious deed into a mechanical slaughter. Their participation only determines the direction in which the bodies will fall, a detail made drearier by the narrator's precise account. Some Gegenes fall with their heads in the water, others with their heads on the sand (1.1006–10).

After fighting the giants, they sail off from Cyzicus only to be blown back by the winds. Through a terrible mishap, they slay their hosts of the night before. The battle is narrated in the Homeric manner, except that Jason kills King Cyzicus in a rather dishonorable way:

> οὐδ' ὅ γε δηιοτῆτος ὑπὲρ μόρον αὖτις ἔμελλεν
> οἴκαδε νυμφιδίους θαλάμους καὶ λέκτρον ἱκέσθαι·
> ἀλλά μιν Αἰσονίδης τετραμμένον ἰθὺς ἑοῖο
> πλῆξεν ἐπαΐξας στῆθος μέσον . . . .
>
> (1.1030–33)
>
> For he [Cyzicus] was not to come from battle beyond fate
> home again to his nuptial room and bed.
> But when he had turned around, Jason, making straight for him,
> struck him in the middle of the chest . . . .

The evocations of a Homeric battle scene make the death of the young king more horrible.[30] Homer often pauses in the story to give emotional force to a man's death by remarking upon what he has lost (e.g., *Il.* 13.363–69). In this case, the reader knows Cyzicus from the banquet the previous night. When dawn reveals their terrible mistake, the Argonauts and the inhabitants of Cyzicus go into deep mourning for the men killed in a pointless battle and for Cyzicus' bride, who has killed herself from grief.

After showing the Argonauts inadvertently ruining Heracles' adventure, the narrator shows how Heracles can endanger the expedition. The hero swells to grotesque proportions, which increase in violence until his mad stampede seems to tear the page. His likeness to Achilles is exaggerated to the point that he loses all control, spurred on as he is by passion.

The departure of Heracles is signaled when he breaks his oar. Eager to put the debacle of Cyzicus behind them, the Argonauts hold a contest to see who can row the longest. When furious winds arise in the evening, all except Heracles stop, exhausted. Though Heracles has won, he continues to row the ship single-handedly in a burst of frenzied competition. His effort is heroic, but absurd. Not content to be the

---

[30] Listed by Vian, *Chant I*, 98, n. 4.

central hero, he has to be the only hero. His attempt to row the boat alone may arise from frustration at his comrades' interference in his battle with the giants. He endangers everyone by "sending shudders through the framework of the ship" (1.1163). Mention of the tomb of the hundred-handed Aegaeon (1.1165), is an implicit criticism Heracles' action: the Argo should be rowed by 50 men.[31] Again, it is implied that Heracles is too big for the poem. Wherever he steps, it bulges out.

Heracles seems at first like the glutton who cadged dinners in Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis*. Having described the hero's super-heroic feat of rowing, the narrator compares rowing to plowing (1.1167) and defines the time of the Argonauts' arrival in Cius as the hour when a plowman returns home ravenously hungry (1.1172–76). Both the situation and the example of Callimachus' Heracles lead the reader to expect that Heracles' excessive heroism will be accompanied by allusion to his monstrous appetite, together with the Callimachean identification of heroism and gluttony.[32] Heracles, however, forgoes dinner and directs his companions to "enjoy the feast" (1.1187). Having made Heracles' size ridiculously out of proportion to the boat, the narrator adds with delightful inconsequence, "and he did not even have dinner!"

Like Achilles in his competitiveness, Heracles displays the passionate love for a member of his own sex that was once attributed to Achilles. Love between males would not have shocked the Greeks, who, as Dover put it, "neither inherited nor developed a belief that a divine power had revealed to mankind a code of law for the regulation of sexual behavior."[33] Homer did not present Achilles and Patroclus as lovers, presumably because that was not how he conceived of their relationship.[34] Later generations interpreted the relationship through the filter of their own times, and patterned Achilles and Patroclus on the heroic couples of history, men like Harmodius and Aristogeiton.[35]

---

[31] Collins, "Studies," 89–92.

[32] Fränkel, however, reads no humor in the scene, but sees Heracles as embodying the Stoic ideal (*Noten*, 143); cf. Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius," 120.

[33] K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (New York, 1978), 203, at the conclusion of the section on homosexuality in Greek mythology and society (198–200). For discussions of pederasty in antiquity, see also Thorkil Vangaard, *Phallós: A Symbol and its History in the Male World* (New York, 1972), 23–49; Georges Devereux, "Greek Pseudo-Homosexuality," *Symbolae Osloenses*, 42 (1967), 69–92; Paul Cartledge, "Politics of Spartan Pederasty," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*, 207 (1981), 17–36.

[34] Aeschines attributed Homer's silence on the subject to delicacy (1.142). W. M. Clarke, "Achilles and Patroclus in Love," *Hermes*, 106 (1978), 381–96, argues that the sexual element is present in Homer, an idea that is criticized by D. S. Barrett, "The Friendship of Achilles and Patroclus," *CB*, 57 (1981), 87–93.

[35] For other examples, see Dover, *Greek Homosexuality*, 191–92.

The classical model for love between males was pederastic. A mature man was the lover (*erastês*), and a youth, the beloved (*erômenos*). The intensity of Achilles' grief at Patroclus' death seemed to arise from passionate love, and later readers of the *Iliad* imposed an erotic relationship on the Homeric figures. In a lost play, Aeschylus presented Achilles and Patroclus as lovers (frags. 135, 136 N^2). For this he is criticized by a character in one of Plato's dialogues, who objects that Patroclus could not have been the *erômenos* because he was older than Achilles (*Symposium* 180a). Heracles and Hylas, however, fit the pattern of warrior and his beautiful, young boy.

Apollonius makes oblique references to Heracles' pederasty, as scholars are coming to realize.[36] Hylas, who accompanies Heracles, is said to be in the bloom of youth (1.132), trained to act as Heracles' servant, and—it is implied—his lover (1.1211). Therefore, Heracles' aloofness on Lemnos (1.855–56), which sets him apart from his eagerly heterosexual comrades, does not indicate the prudent chastity that some have found in him.[37] Hearing of Hylas' disappearance, he exhibits the symptoms of erotic frenzy that are commonplace in Hellenistic poetry. Sweat gushes out, and he is compared to a bull driven mad by a gadfly (1.1261–69).[38]

Heracles' attempt to row the boat by himself evokes Achilles' impetuous wish that the Greeks and the Trojans were dead so that he and Patroclus could storm the city alone (*Il.* 16.97–100). Achilles'

---

[36] Scholars are still divided about whether or not Heracles and Hylas are depicted as lovers. Vian argues that an affair between them would destroy the effect of Heracles' reproach to the men on Lemnos (*Argonautiques I*, 41), and thus misses Apollonius' humor. Fuchs believes that Apollonius left out the erotic motif from delicacy ("Die Hylasgeschichte," 32), though a mad bull, to which Heracles is compared, is hardly a delicate image. Carspecken believes that Heracles subordinates pleasure to duty ("Apollonius Rhodius," 120). The notion of Heracles' austerity is refuted by the style of his departure. See also M. Pulbrook, "The Hylas Myth in Apollonius of Rhodes and Theocritus," *Maynooth Review*, 8 (1983), 31.

More are coming to take the view of Collins ("Studies," 100, 109) and Beye (*Epic and Romance*, 94–96) who argue for the love-relationship: namely, Maria Grazia Palombi, "Eracle e Ila nelle *Argonautiche* di Apollonio Rodio," *Studi Classici et Orientali*, 80 (1985), 71–92, and F. MacGready, "Heracles' Love for Hylas," *Corolla Londiniensis*, 3 (1983), 79–80; Hunter, *Literary Studies*, 38–40; Clauss, *The Best of the Argonauts*, 185–96. As Collins points out (109), Heracles sets up an island of young boys for his own pleasure (1.1351–57). Levin has made the attractive suggestion that Polyphemus too was erotically involved with Hylas (*Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 117–28), followed by Clauss, 194).

[37] For example, Vian, *Argonautiques I*, 259; Levin, "Apollonius' Heracles," 25; Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius," 120.

[38] For sweat and the gadfly as emblematic of erotic passion, see Heather White, *Studies in Theocritus and Other Hellenistic Poets* (Amsterdam, 1979), 64–67; Palombi, "Eracle e Ila," 76–77. At *Arg.* 3.275–77, Eros is compared to a gadfly when he prepares to shoot Medea.

words aroused unfavorable comment in the Alexandrian Age; Aristonicus suggested they were interpolated by someone who believed Achilles was in love with Patroclus.[39] The narrator imports both the Homeric exemplar and its Alexandrian interpretation. Heracles loves Hylas, just as the post-Homeric Achilles was presented as being in love with Patroclus. At the same time, Heracles displays Achilles' intense and pointless competitiveness. Rowing a ship by oneself is as absurd as storming Troy in the absence of Trojans and Greeks. Concerned only with personal glory, Achilles wishes his comrades dead, and Heracles cares nothing for their safety.

Fortunately for the Argonauts, the oar snaps before Heracles can inflict any damage (1.1167–70). Pitched sideways, he picks himself up and glares around (1.1171). Heracles' reckless energy renders him ridiculous, an oversized hero thwarted by a dainty oar. By putting Heracles in an embarrassing position, the narrator implicitly scores a victory for the anti-Homeric side. At the same time, he reminds the reader that Heracles is physically too large for the boat, too large for the poem.[40]

The narrator presents another view of Heracles' ferocious energy when the hero rips out a tree to replace the broken oar. The scene is framed with careful mention of his costume. "He quickly laid his arrow-holding quiver on the ground with the bow and took off his lion's skin" (1.1194–95). He loosens the roots with his club, grabs the tree with both hands, and with the elemental force of a wind shaking a mast, wrenches it out of the ground; then picking up his bow and arrows, lion's skin, and club, he starts back (1.1201–6). The simile reminds the reader how dangerous Heracles is to the ship.[41] The effect of the costume reinforces the difference between Heracles and Jason. The terrifying force with which he uproots the tree is magnified when he takes off the skin. When he puts it back on, he returns to a form normal people can endure. The narrator dresses Jason in the shining symbols of the Apollo-simile, the catalogue, and the cloak, and uses them as the equivalent of Heracles' traditional attributes. Jason's emptiness is concealed by his richly designed cloak, without which he would disappear into thin air. Jason needs the cloak to make him visible; Heracles needs the lion's skin to make him bearable.

---

[39] Hartmut Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (Scholia Vetera)*, (Berlin, 1975), Vol. 4, 183–84.

[40] Apollonius' image of the small boat was to persist into the Roman *recusatio*, as Horace and Propertius also contrasted their toy boats to the big ocean of epic poetry (Propertius 3.9.3–4 Horace, *Od.* 4.15.3–4).

[41] Collins, "Studies," 95; Clauss, *The Best of the Argonauts*, 186–88, finds parallels between Heracles in this scene and the Cyclops Polyphemus.

While Heracles departs to fashion a new oar, Hylas is abducted by a water-nymph in a scene of exquisite beauty (1.1207–39). The moon shines on the boy's beauty. The nymph is about to leave her pool to take part in a festival for Artemis. She falls in love with Hylas and pulls him down with her into the depths. The tenderness of the scene contrasts strongly with Heracles' violence. Hylas escapes from his powerful master into the dreamy embrace of a nymph. The discovery of the boy's loss sends Heracles out of the *Argonautica* and back to his labors (1.1261–72). He flings away his oar and with it any interest in the voyage.

In these last three scenes, Heracles is a caricature of Achilles, while Hylas combines the roles of Briseis and Patroclus. Like Briseis, Hylas is dependent on the hero who has killed his male protector. Briseis' husband was killed by Achilles (*Il.* 19.295–96), Hylas' father, Theiodamas, by Heracles (1.1211–17). Hylas wins a marriage (1.1324–25), which Briseis will never attain (*Il.* 19.297–99). The rape of the boy foreshadows an aspect of Jason's romance with Medea, and sustains the leitmotif of the poem, the transference of power from male to female. Hylas is most like Briseis in the effect of his loss, which removes the best man from the story. Achilles is the best of the Greeks; Heracles, the best of the Argonauts (1.338–41, 1285).

Hylas corresponds to Patroclus both as the male friend of the hero and—according to post-Homeric versions—as his lover. When first seen alone, Hylas sets off "busily" (ὀτραλέως, 1.1210), to fetch water for Heracles' dinner. The adverb recalls Achilles' lament for Patroclus, who used to get his dinner ready for him "busily" (ὀτραλέως, *Il.* 19.317). In the *Iliad*, the loss of Briseis, Achilles' concubine, removes Achilles from both the war and the story; the death of Patroclus, Achilles' friend, sends Achilles back into both the war and the story. Hylas combines the two roles of Briseis and Patroclus, because he simultaneously removes the hero from one story and returns him to the other. Like Achilles, who returns to the *Iliad*, Heracles returns to his proper story.[42] Unfortunately, it is not the *Argonautica*.

By fusing the roles of Briseis and Patroclus into Hylas, the narrator gives Hylas a pivotal role both in the voyage and in the poem about the voyage. First, Heracles' elimination changes the course of the story because the Argonauts will avoid heroic combat. Second, the depar-

[42] Collins points out that Heracles' departure is framed by words that recall the prologues of Homer: ἔρις ἄνδρα, 1.1153; ἀνδρός, 1.1338; μῆνιν, 1.1339 ("Studies," 107–8). The narrator announces the departure of the prototypical epic hero by echoing the opening of epic poems to emphasize that Heracles re-enters epic by leaving the *Argonautica*.

ture of Heracles also defines the voyage in a literary sense. By leaving, he pushes the poem towards Callimachean anti-epic. More than being the story of Jason, the *Argonautica* is *not* the story of Heracles.

Hera's treatment of the heroes reveals a difference between them. She smooths the path for Jason by arranging Medea's infatuation. Her loathing of Heracles sends the hero to Olympus.[43] Vergil later uses Hera's persecution to glorify Aeneas. The goddess makes the men she hates into heroes; her love of Jason brings him a tainted Fleece and, eventually, the murder of his sons.

Heracles' departure puts Jason in undisputed control and defines the literary nature of the poem. From the start, the two heroes are set in an antithetical relationship. Verbal echoes linking the men actually show the differences between them. The breaking of Heracles' oar is cast in the same language as the loss of Jason's shoe. Compare:

> ἄλλο μὲν ἐξεσάωσεν ὑπ' ἰλύος, ἄλλο δ' ἔνερθεν
> κάλλιπεν αὖθι πέδιλον ἐνισχόμενον προχοῇσιν.
> (1.10–11)
>
> He saved one sandal from the mud, but he left the other one
> there held by the flood.

and:

> ἀτὰρ τρύφος ἄλλο μὲν αὐτὸς
> ἄμφω χερσὶν ἔχων πέσε δόχμιος, ἄλλο δὲ πόντος
> κλύζε παλιρροθίοισι φέρων.
> (1.1168–70)
>
> But he himself holding one piece [of the oar]
> in both hands fell over sideways, but the sea
> washed away the other in its currents.

In the two passages, *allo men*, "the one," refers to the sandal and the piece of the oar that each hero retains, while *allo de*, "the other," refers to the sandal and the piece of the oar that are washed away.[44] The door that opens for Jason closes behind Heracles.

In his inaugural speech, Jason compares himself to Heracles when he describes himself as "laboring," for a cruel king (ἀεθλεύων, 1.362).

---

[43] As Wilamowitz put it, „Mensch gewesen, Gott geworden; Mühen erduldet, Himmel erworben" (*Euripides: Herakles* [Darmstadt, 1895], Vol. 1, 38). He connects Heracles' apotheosis and labors (58–59). Joan V. O'Brien argues that Hera's patronage of Jason belongs to an early phase of the legend (*The Transformation of Hera: A Study of Ritual, Hero, and the Goddess in the Iliad* [Lanham, Md., 1993], 157–59).

[44] Clauss points out that the breaking of the oar echoes the Homeric passage describing the death of the lesser Ajax (*Od.* 4.504–10), who also challenged the god of the sea (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 182–83).

Heracles, of course, has made a career of laboring for the cruel King Eurystheus. The participle *aethleuôn*, "laboring," alludes to the *aethloi*, "labors," of Heracles. The careful reader, however, knows Heracles joined the expedition without Eurystheus' permission (1.130–31). In speaking to Hypsipyle, Jason presses the implicit comparison between himself and Heracles. "Grievous labors press on me," he tells her (1.841), and again uses the word *aethloi*. In fact, he will avoid challenges by soliciting the help of a witch. When he makes that fateful decision, Idas will stress the absence of labors (below, pp. 113–14).

Whatever Hypsipyle thinks about Jason's claim to heroic contests, his men are not convinced. Telamon, the father of the competitive Ajax, accuses Jason of leaving Heracles behind because he envied his glory (1.1289–95). He even tries to turn the boat around, a gesture symbolic of changing the course of the song. The sons of the North Wind, the Boreads stop him. They will be murdered by Heracles for this perceived slight (1.1300–8), even though he certainly would not have wanted 50 Argonauts tagging after him for the remainder of his labors.[45] It is fitting that Telamon, the father of Ajax, who goes berserk in Sophocles' play, should assert the competitive values that will drive his son mad. Not sharing these values or even understanding them, Jason is dumbfounded by Telamon's accusation that he left Heracles behind on purpose. He is exonerated only when the sea god Glaucus emerges to explain Zeus's plan:[46]

> "Τίπτε παρὲκ μεγάλοιο Διὸς μενεαίνετε βουλὴν
> Αἰήτεω πτολίεθρον ἄγειν θρασὺν Ἡρακλῆα;
> Ἄργεϊ οἱ μοῖρ᾽ ἐστὶν ἀτασθάλῳ Εὐρυσθῆι
> ἐκπλῆσαι μογέοντα δυώδεκα πάντας ἀέθλους,
> ναίειν δ᾽ ἀθανάτοισι συνέστιον, εἴ κ᾽ ἔτι παύρους
> ἐξανύσῃ· τῶ μή τι ποθὴ κείνοιο πελέσθω." (1.1315–20)

> "Why, going against the plan of great Zeus, do you desire
> to bring bold Heracles to the city of Aeetes?
> For the wicked Eurystheus in Argos
> he is fated to struggle and finish all twelve labors

---

[45] Fusillo uses this incident as an illustration of Heracles' archaic brutality (*Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 112).

[46] Nevertheless, the story could have happened or have been told the way Telamon imagines. In a subtle play on Homer, picked up by Clauss (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 35–36), the narrator closes his catalogue of heroes with an explanation of why the Argonauts were called Minyans: the best of the Argonauts thus designated themselves (1.229–33). This scholarly addendum, Clauss has argued, echoes the closing questions at the end of the Homeric catalogue: who had the best horses and who was the best warrior (*Il.* 761–62)? In answer to the last question, Homer replies that Ajax was the best warrior in the absence of Achilles. With Heracles as the absent warrior, the father of Ajax accuses Jason of scheming for the kind of event that would in the *Iliad* give his son such honor.

and then to live among the immortals and share their hearth,
if he only finishes the few that are left.
So let there not be longing for him."

In joining the Argonauts' voyage, Heracles digresses from his own story: his twelve labors. These labors frame his stay with the Argonauts. He is first seen setting down the Erymanthian boar (1.122–32). When he leaves the *Argonautica*, he returns to his labors. The "plan of Zeus," according to which Heracles is returned to his heroic milieu (Διὸς βουλή, 1.1315), underscores the epic nature of his true story, because the events of the *Iliad*, according to its proem, were motivated by the will of Zeus (Διὸς βουλή *Il.* 1.5). The *Argonautica*, in contrast, is directed by the goddess Hera.[47]

The philosopher Prodicus allegorized Heracles' life as the choice between two paths: the difficult one leading up towards virtue; the easy one leading down to vice.[48] The hero chooses the uphill road; the Argonauts, the other, easier one. Apollonius gives a literary dimension to an ethical allegory. Heracles' departure pushes the story in the anti-heroic direction. He does not belong in the kind of story the narrator is determined to write. True, Heracles was not connected with the story of the Golden Fleece. Apollonius, however, treats Heracles' departure as though it were the result of the narrator's action. In his introduction to the events that lead to Heracles' grand exit, the narrator apologizes for "wandering away" from the story to tell how Heracles acquired the boy Hylas:

Ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν τηλοῦ κεν ἀποπλάγξειεν ἀοιδῆς.
(1.1220)

But this would be to wander far from the song.

At the end of the episode, the god Glaucus uses the same verb, "wander away," to describe Heracles' departure from the voyage (1.1325). The narrator's stylistic error, digression, parallels Heracles' departure from the voyage. The act of narrating affects what is narrated. The narrator asserts his command over the poem by drawing attention to his editorial action. Pretending to lose control, the narrator achieves his goal of removing the one character who could keep the poem from turning into a love story. With a "slip" of the pen, the narrator gets rid of the opposition, as if saying, "Forgive my digression—oh dear! I dropped Heracles."

For his abandoned companions, however, Heracles, just like Achil-

---

[47] Malcolm Campbell, *Studies in The Third Book of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica* (New York, 1983), 50–55; Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, 58–59.

[48] Prodicus, *Horae*, in Diels-Kranz, *Vorsokratiker*, Vol. 2, 312–16; schol. Aristophanes, *Clouds* 361; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 2.1.21–34.

les in the *Iliad*, remains the main character. None of the remaining Argonauts can fill the hole he leaves in the Argo or the story. By his failure to develop into a vital character, Jason does not fill the hole, but defines its presence. The winds blowing at the beginning and end of this section contribute to the sense that the delicate fabric of the poem has been torn. Heracles is compared to a mighty wind when he wrenches out the sapling for his oar (1.1201–5); the Boreads' tomb miraculously responds to the North Wind (1.1306–9). The mention of winds framing Heracles' departure creates an illusion of torn edges flapping about the hole in the poem.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE THREE WORLDS

The *Argonautica* is a contest, waged on a grand scale between the narrator and the heroes over the issue of poetry. Yet, while the narrator pulls the strings in plotting a traditional story against Callimachean poetics, he, like the characters, is part of the text the poet created. The real communication takes place between those who share in the art: Apollonius, now long dead, and the unknown reader. Writing for the reader and not for an audience present in front of him, Apollonius fills in the intervening space with representatives of narrator and reader, who interact with the characters inside the poem, and, as it were, break through the barriers of time and fiction. Instead of letting the three parties sit passively in their separate territories, Apollonius makes them interact with one another. The war of contending aesthetics continues in Book 2, where a hero complains, a prophet explains, and two outside observers evaluate the poem on the reader's behalf.

The *Argonautica* is simultaneously a written account of a Bronze Age adventure story and the adventures of the Argonauts themselves—both the words and the deeds signified by the words. Apollonius draws attention to the gap between words and deeds by creating a discontinuity between the words of the narrator and the deeds of the heroes, or their understanding of those experiences. The two levels of narrative—the heroes' world and their narrator's—pull apart as oil from water.[1] The first book sustained a tension between the Argonauts and their narrator in the implicit rivalry between Heracles and Jason. The tension remains after the hero's departure. The Argonauts, who choose Heracles as their leader and who readily obey his commands, do not give him up without a struggle. Their reaction to his loss reverberates throughout the poem, and exposes the gulf between the two aesthetic positions. Harmony seems achieved after Telamon's apology at the conclusion of Book 1.

Apollonius emphasizes the space separating the narrative worlds by ending the first book with a sunrise.[2] Homer, however, tries to make

---

[1] Fusillo, *Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 360, describes poet and heroes as occupying different planes.

[2] Beye points out the discontinuity of the sunrise (*Epic and Romance*, 35). John Van

that space disappear. In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, individual books end with nightfall, the close of the day's adventures, when characters, poet, and audience together reach a point of resolution. It makes sense for the hero to sleep when the poet comes to a natural break and the reader reaches the end of a papyrus roll.[3] A poet denying the separation between the worlds inside and outside the story would blur the book-division. Apollonius, however, achieves a specious realism by alluding to the artificiality of form. He reminds the reader of the difference between experience itself and experience as read or written. The ideological difference between heroes and narrator is mirrored and intensified through the physical medium of the book-roll. The reader's position is problematic, because Books 1 and 2 are presented simultaneously as separate and united.

At first, the reader's experience runs parallel to the heroes'. The reader moves to a new papyrus roll; the heroes step out onto a new land. Yet the language resists an easy identification. While the reader rolls up Book 1 slowly and laboriously, the heroes step ashore in the first line of Book 2 easily and naturally:

> ... κώπῃσιν ἅμ' ἠελίῳ ἐπέκελσαν.
> Ἔνθα δ' ἔσαν σταθμοί τε βοῶν αὖλίς τ' Ἀμύκοιο ... .
> (1.1362–2.1)

> ... by rowing they landed at sunrise.
> There the stalls and farm of Amycus were ... .

Commentators have noticed the smoothness of this transition from one book to the next. The story is not interrupted with an invocation to a deity (Book 2 is unique in this respect), and the last line of Book 1 is joined to the first line of the next book by the relative adverb ἔνθα,

---

Sickle suggests that each book of the *Argonautica* would take up one book-roll, although the fourth book of the *Argonautica* (1781 lines) is rather long for what is believed to be the standard size of a roll ("The Book-Roll and Some Conventions of the Poetic Book," *Arethusa*, 13 [1980], 8). Malcolm Campbell finds resonance with the beginnings and ends of Homeric books ("Apollonian and Homeric Book Division," *Mnemosyne*, 36 [1983], 154–56). For the difficulty of moving from one papyrus roll to the next, see L. D. Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1974), 2.

[3] It is a matter of debate whether the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were divided into twenty-four books by Homer or by the Alexandrians (*Vita Homeri* 2.4; Eustathius 5.29). For the former position, see G. P. Goold, "Homer and the Alphabet," *TAPA*, 91 (1960), 289–91; and Cedric Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, 1958), 283; for the latter, see Wilamowitz, *Homerische Untersuchungen* (Berlin, 1884), 369, n. 47. That the Homeric books end at natural breaks of the narrative is not disputed. Of the *Iliad*, Books 7, 8, and 9 end with night; of the *Odyssey*, Books 1–5, 7, 14, 16, 18, and 19. Books 8, 11, and 19 of the *Iliad* and Books 2, 3, 5, 8, 16, and 17 of the *Odyssey* open with a sunrise.

"there" or "where."[4] The heroes' experience merges with the words describing it.

The reader outside the text is alienated from the heroes by the book-scrolls containing the heroes' adventures. The heroes, who simply step ashore, have no difficulty in moving from Book 1 to Book 2. An attempt is made to facilitate the transition for the reader. The closing episode of Book 1, the rape of Hylas, and the opening episode of Book 2, the boxing match with Amycus, were both told previously by Theocritus.[5] To tie the two episodes more closely together, Apollonius changes the location of the second episode from its Theocritean setting (*Id.* 22.27–29). He puts Amycus before the Symplegades, instead of after.

The narrator has used the rhetorical structure of a book-ending to make a thematic statement. He implies that Telamon's apology at the close of Book 1 means that the issue of leadership has been resolved, that the Argonauts willingly follow Jason. The smooth flow of words joining the first two books refutes this implied conclusion. The heroes know nothing of papyrus rolls or book endings. They are not aware of themselves as characters in a book, whose form did not exist in the Bronze Age Greece. Most important, they do not perceive any resolution concerning Heracles.

The quarrel between narrator and heroes continues to simmer in the first episode of Book 2, the boxing match between Polydeuces and the crude King Amycus. The narrator gives a well-organized account of the boxing match, one that promises to tie the poem together thematically. Amycus' barbaric cruelty foreshadows Aeetes', and the boxing match evokes other victories of a cosmic importance—gods over giants, civilization over barbarism.[6] The victory of the courteous Polydeuces over the uncouth Amycus symbolizes the victory of Jason over the more archaic Heracles. Like Heracles Amycus is competitive, "proud spirited" (μέγα φρονέων, 1.348; 2.19). Theocritus had previously cast Amycus in the Homeric style by comparing him to the Colossus of Rhodes (above, p. 30). He had also implicitly likened him to Heracles by dressing him in a lion's skin (*Id.* 22.51–52). Young, handsome, and heterosexual, the victorious Polydeuces resembles Jason, who is destined to prevail (with the narrator's help) over Heracles and (with

---

[4] Fränkel, *Noten*, 155. Beye attributes the omission of the invocation to Alexandrian asymmetry (*Epic and Romance*, 35).

[5] See above, pp. 11–13, for discussion and bibliography about the relative chronology of Theocritus and Apollonius.

[6] Lawall, "Jason as Anti-Hero," 132–34; Hermann Fränkel, "Apollonius Rhodius as a Narrator in *Argonautica* 2.1–140," *TAPA*, 83 (1952), 146; Vian, *Argonautiques I*, 134–35. Clauss points out that in pictures of the Gigantomachy the gods wear cloaks and swords, the giants, animal skins and clubs (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 34, n. 25).

Medea's help) over Aeetes. Polydeuces' cloak puts him on Jason's side.[7] Because the cloak was given to him by a Lemnian woman (2.30–32), he was not among those who stayed with Heracles by the ship. Yet, even though Polydeuces shines like a star (2.40–42), and though, unlike Jason, he defeats Amycus with his own strength and skill, the Argonauts are not impressed. Instead, one of them murmurs that Heracles could have done better:

> "Φράζεσθ' ὅττι κεν ᾗσιν ἀναλκείῃσιν ἔρεξαν,
> εἴ πως Ἡρακλῆα θεὸς καὶ δεῦρο κόμισσεν.
> Ἦτοι μὲν γὰρ ἐγὼ κείνου παρεόντος ἔολπα
> οὐδ' ἂν πυγμαχίῃ κρινθήμεναι· ἀλλ' ὅτε θεσμούς
> ἤλυθεν ἐξερέων, αὐτοῖς ἄφαρ οἷς ἀγόρευε
> θεσμοῖσιν ῥοπάλῳ μιν ἀγηνορίης λελαθέσθαι.
> Ναὶ μὲν ἀκήδεστον γαίῃ ἔνι τόνδε λιπόντες
> πόντον ἐπέπλωμεν· μάλα δ' ἡμέων αὐτὸς ἕκαστος
> εἴσεται οὐλομένην ἄτην ἀπάνευθεν ἐόντος."
>
> (2.145–53)
>
> "Think of what they would have done in their cowardice
> if somehow the god had brought Heracles here too.
> Indeed I think that if he had been present
> there would have been no boxing match. But when he [Amycus]
> came to tell his laws, he would at once—with one whack of the club—
> have forgotten his pride and the laws too that he was announcing.
> Yes, we left him [Heracles] heedlessly on land
> and sailed on. Truly, each one of us
> will know a ruinous doom, without him."

Just as the Argonauts failed to notice Jason's likeness to Apollo, so here this nameless Argonaut ignores the carefully constructed antithesis between the Heraclean Amycus and the Jasonian Polydeuces. The narrator has gone to considerable trouble to show that the Argonauts do not need Heracles, but they fail to realize this.[8] Although he is no longer there, and has probably forgotten them, Heracles is still their central hero. His bench in the center of the boat remains empty.

Homeric allusions confirm their loss. Amycus' challenge is modeled on a scene in the *Iliad*, where Hector is told to challenge the best of the Greeks in single combat (*Il.* 7.50). The best man, however, cannot come forward because Achilles remains aloof from the war. Therefore, Hector bids the Greeks to send forth a "chieftain" (πρόμος, *Il.* 7.75). In the *Argonautica* too, Polydeuces steps forth as a "chieftain" when Amycus challenges the best of the Argonauts (2.15, 21). Heracles,

---

[7] Rose, "Clothing Imagery," 33; Clauss, *The Best of the Argonauts*, 34.

[8] Eichgrün remarks correctly that the mutiny is not satisfactorily resolved at the end of the first book ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 91).

though absent, is still the best man. When the heroes wish they had followed the story that included Heracles, we must consider our own reason for continuing the voyage. With the best man gone—the poem emphasizes that—why do we go on reading?

Whom should we believe, the heroes or the narrator? How seriously should we take the heroes' complaint about Heracles' absence? Or how should we trust a narrator who tells us that harmony has been restored when his own character's words refute him? The reader has to look down from above with the narrator and up from below with the heroes at the same event. By engaging the reader in sewing together the two realms, the poet brings the story to life.

The hero's protest is answered twenty-five lines later, when the Argonauts meet Phineus, the narrator's delegate. He enunciates Callimachean doctrine, echoes the Callimachean narrator, and sends the heroes from epic to romance. Such a figure is called the narrator's agent.[9] Through Phineus' plight the narrator answers the Argonaut's criticism by presenting the dangers of violating Callimachus' literary law. The many verbal echoes connecting Amycus and Phineus keep the Argonaut's complaint in the foreground and emphasize the ideological difference between Heracles' leadership and Phineus' authority.[10] In turn, allusions to Heracles and Phineus impose a unity on the story.[11]

In Theocritus, Heracles is the love-hero, and the voyage of the Argo the epic foil to his passion. Heracles' love for the boy makes him forget his duty to his friends, who curse him as a deserter (*Id.* 13.73). Apollonius makes Heracles' departure pivotal to the story, but reverses the direction. Heracles is the only hero with authority to stop the poem from turning into a love story. Although very different in character and appearance, the massive hero and the emaciated seer together enable the narrator to make a unified literary statement. By dismissing Heracles abruptly from the book, the narrator symbolically rejects epic poetry. By inserting Phineus, who steers the plot towards a love story, the narrator turns a negative decision into a positive one. "Trust in

---

[9] Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 153–54.

[10] The correspondences between the episodes have been noticed by Amy R. Rose, "Three Narrative Themes in Apollonios' Bebrykian Episode (*Argonautika* 2. 11–163)," *WS*, N.F. 18 (1984), 115–35. Amycus is "noble," ἀγήνωρ (2.2); Phineus is the son of Agenor (2.178 and passim). Amycus boxes with his neighbors (2.7); Phineus gives his neighbors prophecies (2.186). Neither asks the Argonauts for their names: Amycus from arrogance (2.8–9), Phineus, because he knows (2.209–11). Amycus prefaces his arrogant command with κέκλυθ', "listen" (2.11); Phineus' speech begins with κλῦτε, "listen" (2.209). Amycus arouses anger in all the Argonauts, especially Polydeuces (2.19–20); Phineus arouses pity from all, especially the sons of Boreas (2.240–41).

[11] Lawall, "Jason as Anti-Hero," 125, n. 11; Vian, *Argonautiques I*, 126–27; Levin, *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 168. Cf. the echo of 2.151 at 2.219.

deceitful Aphrodite," Phineus tells the Argonauts (2.423–24), and, trusting him, they do. The Boreads who keep Telamon from looking for Heracles are also the ones who save Phineus from the Harpies.

They drive the Harpies off, and pursue them until called off by Iris (2.284–300). They then turn around at the islands named for that action—the Strophades, "the turning point." The reader too follows a similar course, because inscribed within the episode is a Callimachean tale told backwards. Just after the Boreads return from pursuing the Harpies, Phineus introduces his rescuers to his young friend Paraebius, whose father had cut down a tree in a sacred forest (2.468–89), and so had committed the crime of Erysichthon, the villain of Callimachus' sixth hymn.[12] There, Erysichthon is punished with an endless, gnawing hunger until he wastes away. The first sight of Phineus—"... only his skin held his bones together" (... ῥινοὶ δὲ σὺν ὀστέα μοῦνον ἔεργον, 2.201)—echoes the last view of Erysichthon in Callimachus' story—"... only skin and bones were left" (... ῥινός τε καὶ ὀστέα μῶνον ἐλείφθη, *H. Dem.* 6.93). Phineus' ravenous hunger and the crime of Paraebius' father recall the two major features of Erysichthon's story, in reverse order. Like the narrator, Phineus echoes Callimachus. Describing the irrevocability of his blindness, he echoes a line from Callimachus' fifth *Hymn*, about another blind prophet, Tiresias.[13] Tiresias is not a criminal. He was punished for accidently seeing Athena naked. Allusions to Erysichthon and Tiresias, victims of divine punishment, put Phineus' punishment in a Callimachean context.

Phineus learned Callimachean doctrine through suffering. Zeus punished him because he told too much and left no room for the gods' intervention (2.390). Prophecy is narrative, and, according to Callimachus, a sin means narrating in the epic manner (above, p. 29). Like the narrator, Phineus is concerned with Alexandrian literary theory. His previous oracles are evaluated as narrative. He used to prophesy in an epic manner "in chronological sequence and to the end" (ἑξείης τε καὶ ἐς τέλος, 2.314). Talking to his rescuers, he does not tell the whole story, but breaks off, fearing to "sin" again (2.390–91).

At this moment his mask slips because he speaks in the words of the narrator.[14] Earlier, the narrator breaks off with these words:

> Ἀλλὰ τί μύθους
> Αἰθαλίδεω χρειώ με διηνεκέως ἀγορεύειν;
> (1.648–49)

---

[12] Stoessl, *Apollonius Rhodios*, 90–91.

[13] Bulloch points out the similar wording of *Arg.* 2.244–45 and Callimachus, *H. Ath.* 5.103, and the similarity of context, how the prophets were blinded ("Callimachus' *Erysichthon*," 122). He believes, however, that Callimachus echoes Apollonius here.

[14] Fusillo, *Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 103.

But why must I recount stories
of Aethalides *diênekeôs*, all the way through?

Phineus breaks off his prophecy with a very similar expression:

"ἀλλὰ τίη με πάλιν χρειὼ ἀλιτέσθαι
μαντοσύνῃ τὰ ἕκαστα διηνεκὲς ἐξενέποντα;"
(2.390–91)

"But why should I sin again,
telling in prophecy everything *diênekeôs*, all the way through?"

Note the repetitions: *alla ti*/*alla tiê*; *chreiô*/*chreiô*; *me*/*me*; *diênekeôs*/*diênekes*. Moreover, *diênekes*, "continuously, all the way through," can also mean "Homeric" (Callimachus, *Ait.* frag. 1.3).

In general, Phineus mirrors the narrator, with his scholarly interest in ethnography and geography.[15] As a prophet, he foretells what the Argonauts will experience, and his account coincides with the narrator's in both matter and manner. The Argonauts hear from Phineus what they will later experience. The reader receives two very similar stories given by Phineus and the narrator.[16] According to Callimachus, the Argonauts returned from Colchis by the same road they had taken (*Ait.* frag. 9). The narrator accommodates this version by describing the same journey twice in a Callimachean voice. Therefore, Phineus resembles the narrator in his intellectual interests, his mode of expression, and his Callimachean adherence. His crime and punishment are described in Callimachean terms. The Argonauts are trapped in a world where the narrator, prophet, and gods are aligned against them in a literary war.

The Etesian Winds keep the Argonauts from leaving Phineus for forty days. There, the narrator relates the story of the winds' origin (2.498–527) with what has been described as pointless erudition.[17] To be sure, it is highly appropriate to introduce an etiological story concerning Cyrene (2.500), from whom Callimachus' homeland was named. Etiological stories were Callimachus' hallmark.[18] In addition, the narrator includes a comment on his narrative. He introduces the winds to reaffirm that the course of the narrative is Callimachean. The story has a metaliterary purpose. Before the Argonauts meet Phineus, their stops are solely motivated by the winds, an obvious plot device.[19]

---

[15] Fusillo points out that Phineus is Alexandrian in his interests (*Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 101).
[16] Levin lists the correspondences between Phineus' account and the narrator's (*Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 157–59).
[17] Eichgrün, "Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 99.
[18] Händel, *Beobachtungen*, 43; Fusillo, *Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 60.
[19] Händel, *Beobachtungen*, 30.

These winds are controlled by the Callimachean narrator, outside the story. With the introduction of Phineus, events follow laws of cause and effect. His advice controls both the Argonauts' policy and their actions. He steers them to their fateful meeting with Medea's nephews. Because Phineus tells the Argonauts to trust the goddess of love, Jason seduces Medea instead of honorably performing the task demanded by her father. Although the story moves by cause and effect, it goes exactly as before. The winds blowing out of an action caused by Cyrene's son reveal the fine hand of Callimachus.

Besides their adherence to Callimachean doctrine, Phineus and the narrator share a malevolent amusement at the heroes. The narrator reveals a cruel sense of humor at Cyzicus, where he mocks a problem of Homeric narrative, the inconsistency between plan and action.[20] Horace remarks, "the noble Homer nods," *bonus dormitat Homerus* (*Ars Poetica* 359). The narrator involves his unwitting characters in a criticism of Homer by showing this absentmindedness on Cyzicus. First he allows an error to occur, and then calls attention to it by his heavy-handed correction.

The Argonauts climb Mt. Dindymum to see what lies ahead (2.985–88), but before they reach the top, return to the ship to help Heracles slay the giants. When they leave, without having seen the view from the mountain, the winds blow them back, and they engage in battle with the kindly men of Cyzicus. The narrator, controlling the winds, has blown the Argonauts back because they have not seen the view from Mt. Dindymum. Either the heroes forget to climb the mountain or the narrator forgets to send them up to the top. They forfeit a splendid view; the narrator forfeits a splendid description (1.1112–16). In either case, a Homeric error is corrected when the narrator blows the characters back to Cyzicus and into senseless slaughter. Again, the act of narrating affects what is narrated. A Homeric error, it is implied, has terrible consequences.[21] While mocking Homer's carelessness, the narrator puts his heroes in an awkward social situation. Controller of the winds, the narrator confines his characters on Cyzicus. Eager to

---

[20] Marchinus van der Valk examines Aristarchus' criticisms of *Od.* 13.154–58, in which Athena gives commands that are not followed, and of *Od.* 16.152–53, in which Telemachus sends a messenger to Laertes without its being said that the messenger fulfilled his duty (*Textual Criticism of the Odyssey* [Leiden, 1949], 190, cf. 226–29). For other examples, see R. R. Schlunk, *The Homeric Scholia and the Aeneid: A Study of the Influence of Ancient Homeric Literary Criticism on Virgil* (Ann Arbor, 1974), 74–77. Ancient scholars criticized the *Doloneia* because Odysseus and Diomedes set out to spy on the Trojans but forget their mission in their joy at plunder.

[21] To be sure, there doubtless existed a legend wherein the Argonauts slew the men of Cyzicus. But Apollonius tells his story as though it were a work in progress and not a finished product.

leave the scene of their mistake, the heroes are forced to hear the lamentations of the island's unfortunate inhabitants for twelve days past the normal mourning period (1.1078–80).

The prophet, who represents the narrator, is no kinder to the heroes. Related to Phineus by marriage, the Boreads desire to free him from the Harpies, but fear to incur the wrath of the gods (2.246–53). Phineus reassures them with an oath that the gods will not harm them for rescuing him (2.256–61). Knowledge of their fate puts the reader in uneasy complicity with the prophet. The narrator has mentioned that Heracles will kill the Boreads for preventing Telamon from turning the boat around (1.1298–1308). If, as seems probable, Apollonius made the story up, then Glaucus could have saved the lives of the Boreads by appearing sooner.[22] Phineus does not like them either. When he promises they need not fear divine retribution, he winks at the reader, who knows the Boreads' fate and can share in the joke against the idealistic young men.

In a general way, Phineus' instructions send the Argonauts into Medea's clutches. He tells them, "Trust in deceitful Aphrodite" (2.423–24). This is the crucial decision of the poem. Duped by the deceitful goddess, Medea is tricked into loving Jason. At the same time, Jason and the Argonauts are tricked into thinking a witch in love is safer than fire-breathing bulls. More important, the decision to rely on love rather than on heroism has a literary meaning in Alexandria. Through this decision, the narrator shows his allegiance to Callimachus, and the poet gives a focus to Callimachean poetry.

Phineus' other role is to show the heroes how to get through the clashing rocks, the Symplegades. First, they must send a dove through, whose safe passage will presage that of the Argo. If the dove is crushed by the rocks, the heroes must abandon the quest (2.324–40). Everything depends on this: the future of the enterprise, the Fleece, and two-and-a-half books of narrative. For the heroes and the narrator, these rocks symbolize a moment of crisis.

The Argonauts failed to notice the book's ending when they stepped out onto Amycus' territory. The end of a papyrus roll—Apollonius' landscape is often literary—is suggested by the Symplegades. Two sets of magical rocks, the Symplegades in Book 2 and the Planctae in Book 4, divide the heroes' voyage much as four papyrus rolls divide its account. As if realizing the reader's importance, the narrator expends every effort to win approval. While the Callimachean prophet waves the heroes off, Callimachus' legendary ancestor, Euphemus, holds the

---

[22] Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, 71.

fateful dove (2.555–56). Because the narrator belongs to the correct literary school, there is nothing to worry about. The dove makes it through, with the loss of only a few tail feathers (2.571–73). With a push from Athena's hand the Argo makes it too, losing its stern ornament. At this crucial moment, the narrator compares the Argo, at that moment, to a *cylinder*, an ancient word for the container of book rolls (2.593). This bookish term underscores the bookish nature of the poem. Because the Argo made it through the rocks, the four books of the *Argonautica* have made it into the reader's hands. Just as Athena's hand pushes the boat, so the reader's hand keeps the story going by unrolling the volume. By drawing attention to the roll in the reader's hands, the poet emphasizes that the events contained within the text are made real through the reader's cooperation. The reader is a vital member of the crew, symbolically rowing the poem along while reading the papyrus. Yet, there also exists a subversive meaning. Mention of the *cylinder* introduces the possibility of putting the scroll back in its container. This suggestion is reinforced by the reactions of internal observers. Representatives of the reader give the poem an unfavorable review in two episodes following the Symplegades.

Because of the dual nature of the *Argonautica*—a Homeric epic by a Callimachean narrator—each literary faction of contemporary Alexandria can find fault with the poem. The poem's ideal reader belongs to one side or the other in the quarrel about epic poetry. Inside the poem, Apollo represents the Callimacheans, and King Lycus the Telchines. Few poets resist an opportunity to praise their poems. The gods on Olympus watch with fascination the events played out in the *Iliad*. Odysseus' host, King Alcinous, speaks for Homer's audience when he praises Odysseus' story extravagantly (*Od.* 11.363–69). His generosity to Odysseus, moreover, encourages Homer's audience to reward the poet.[23] In the *Argonautica*, a god and a king, Apollo and Lycus, represent the implied readers of the poem, who belong to one of the two literary parties.[24] Despite their ideological differences, the internal

---

[23] *Od.* 11.363–70, 13.1–15. The same point is made by Suerbaum, "Die Ich-erzählungen," 168–69. It is, of course, normal for poets to praise their work in their poetry, as does Pindar, *Nem.* 7.61–63; Aristophanes, *Ach.* 643–51, *Knights* 507–11. In Homer, the good people are charmed by Odysseus' stories (*Od.* 17.518–21), while the evil suitors are bored by them (17.446–52). Fränkel suggests that the suitors' abuse of the disguised Odysseus may reflect the treatment of less fortunate Dark Age poets (*Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 11–12). If so, their behavior brings out their thematic resemblance to Aegisthus, who killed a poet (*Od.* 3.267–71).

[24] For gods representing an audience, see Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 55, n. 7, and J. Griffin, "The Divine Audience and the Religion of the *Iliad*," *CQ*, 28 (1978), 11, 13–14. For evidence that epics were performed at feasts, see above, chap. 2, n. 20.

audiences agree with the heroes' assessment. Things are worse without Heracles. Just as the Argonauts have to pass through the clashing rocks, so the poet and reader must prevail against adverse judgments inside the poem.

After the heroes pass safely through the rocks, Apollonius seems to reassure the reader that indeed the Argo is bound for glory. Tiphys proclaims the optimistic message that the success of the mission is assured (2.610–18). Like Agamemnon in Book 2 of the *Iliad*, Jason tests the courage of his men by feigning despair. His test, unlike Agamemnon's, succeeds in its immediate purpose (2.620–38). The heroes' eagerness to continue the voyage seems to presage the reader's desire to continue reading. To underscore the reader's confidence, the Callimachean god of poetry reveals himself to the Argonauts (2.669–84). Because Apollonius is a master of contradicting the expectations raised by narrative propriety, we should be wary of the optimism he seems to arouse.

A test of courage should precede a danger, but, it has been argued, Jason's test contrasts favorably with Agamemnon's because he elicits the response he desires.[25] The model for this scene in the *Iliad*, however, underscores the discouraging reality. Once again, Jason is cast in the role of Agamemnon. Tiphys' encouraging words to him correspond to the false dream Zeus sends Agamemnon before he tests his troops (*Il.* 2.1–34). Tiphys tells the truth when he says that everything will be easy now, but a sinister payment awaits the heroes of such an easy victory. After Jason's successful test of his men, the reader is distanced from the Argonauts by knowledge of what is to come. The Argonauts believe they have nothing to fear in the journey ahead, now that they have passed the Symplegades. Recognizing the allusion to the *Iliad*, the reader knows, as the heroes cannot, that their situation is now extremely dangerous, and soon after his heartening speech, Tiphys drops dead (2.854–57). Appearance and reality are set at variance with each other. The heroes feel that they have escaped death; the reader senses something worse awaits them.

In the same way, the epiphany of Apollo contradicts the impression it seems designed to create. On the surface, the god seems to reveal himself as a gesture of good will.[26] The atmosphere is made Callimach-

---

[25] Händel makes a weak defense of Apollonius by arguing that he included a senseless test of heroes simply because such a test was demanded by the laws of epic (*Beobachtungen*, 68–70). That Jason shows leadership has been argued by Fränkel, *Noten*, 217–21; Levin, *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 172–76.

[26] See, for example, Levin, *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 178; Vian, *Argonautiques I*, 124–25; Fusillo, *Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 60, 62. For examples of epiphanies to a select few in Greek literature, see Williams, *Hymn to Apollo*, 23. For

ean, with the light described as "delicate" (λεπτόν, *H. Ap.* 2.670), an important word in Callimachean poetic theory (*Ep.* 27.3, *Ait.* frag. 1.24). Because, according to Callimachus, the god appears only to men who are "noble" (ἐσθλοί, *H. Ap.* 2.9), the epiphany seems a mark of special privilege to the Argonauts, who honor him in song.[27]

Σὺν δέ σφιν ἐὺς πάις Οἰάγροιο
Βιστονίῃ φόρμιγγι λιγείης ἦρχεν ἀοιδῆς·
ὥς ποτε πετραίῃ ὑπὸ δειράδι Παρνησοῖο
Δελφύνην τόξοισι πελώριον ἐξενάριξεν,
κοῦρος ἐὼν ἔτι γυμνός, ἔτι πλοκάμοισι γεγηθώς.
ἱλήκοις· αἰεί τοι, ἄναξ, ἄτμητοι ἔθειραι,
αἰὲν ἀδήλητοι· τὼς γὰρ θέμις. οἰόθι δ' αὐτὴ
Λητὼ Κοιογένεια φίλαις ἐνὶ χερσὶν ἀφάσσει.
πολλὰ δὲ Κωρύκιαι Νύμφαι, Πλείστοιο θύγατρες,
θαρσύνεσκον ἔπεσσιν, ἵη ἵε κεκληγυῖαι·
ἔνθεν δὴ τόδε καλὸν ἐφύμνιον ἔπλετο Φοίβῳ.
(2.703–13)

... and with them the noble son of Oeagrus
began the clear song on his Bistonian lyre:
how once under the rocky ridge of Parnassus
he slew the monster Delphyne with his arrows,
while still an unbearded lad, still rejoicing in his locks.
May you be propitious—for always, lord, your hair is uncut,
always undestroyed: for so it is law. Only Leto herself,
daughter of Coeus, strokes it with her own hands.
And often the Corycian nymphs, daughters of Pleistus,
gave encouragement with their words, calling "Hiê, hiê [shoot, shoot];"
and from there Phoebus had this lovely refrain.

The passage evokes the beginning of the *Argonautica*, with its mystic union of narrator, reader, and heroes. Orpheus narrates one of Apollo's exploits, the subject of the *Homeric Hymn* to the Pythian Apollo. The issue of poetic voice is complicated because Callimachus also wrote a *Hymn to Apollo*, which also tells the story of the Pythian snake. From which source does Orpheus' hymn derive? Is it Homeric or Callimachean? Like Callimachus (*H. Ap.* 2.97–103), Orpheus mentions that the cry "Hiê" was uttered by the bystanders, whereas in the *Homeric Hymn*, Apollo taught the cry "Hiê Paion" to the priests he brought to Delphi (3.500). And like Callimachus (frag. 88), Orpheus calls the dragon Delphyne. The god receives a Callimachean hymn.

The narrator interrupts Orpheus to add his own words to Apollo.

---

parallels in this episode with passages in Callimachus, see Hunter, "Apollo and the Argonauts," 57–60.

[27] See Williams' remark on the literary commendation suggested by the word ἐσθλός ("A Theophany in Theocritus," CQ, 65 [1971], 143, n. 3).

Orpheus' song is rendered in the third person because Orpheus is a character inside his story. The narrator can address the god directly because narrators, like gods, are separate from the stories. After Orpheus mentions Apollo's hair, the narrator adds that the hair is still uncut. The ever-growing hair is a visual image of the continuity between the Bronze Age and the Alexandrian Age.

Orpheus' first song ended a quarrel that had sprung up among the Argonauts (1.496–98). In Orpheus' second song, a *Hymn to Apollo*, the narrator joins his realm to the heroes' by interrupting the poet in the poem. Unaware that he commemorates that event, Orpheus urges the Argonauts to build a temple to Concord. The beginning of the poem brought narrator and heroes together in honor of Apollo. Now, after the boat passes through the Symplegades, the same parties are brought together in honor of the same god, who is also the patron of Callimachean poetry.

Apollo's appearance has all the glamor and irrelevance of the simile that likens Jason to Apollo (1.307–10).[28] This glamor had been undercut with the Argonauts' failure to perceive Jason as godlike. Here, the Callimachean gloss of the narrative surface is cracked when the reader works out the meaning of the god's appearance. It is not explained why Apollo departs for the Hyperboreans. The Homeric gods' departure from Olympus always signifies their removal from the story. Thus, Thetis has to wait for Zeus's return from the Ethiopians before she can ask him to intervene on Achilles' behalf (*Il.* 1.423–25). Athena waits until Poseidon has departed for the Ethiopians before intervening to help Odysseus (*Od.* 1.19–21). From reading Homer, we know that Apollo removes himself from the Argonauts' adventures by visiting the Hyperboreans. In Homeric narrative, the gods, who enjoy watching human struggles, mirror Homer's actual audience, which enjoyed these same struggles as narrative. In Apollonius, Apollo's departure indicates his lack of interest in the Argonauts and their deeds—a devastating criticism of the poem.

The god's response to the story is matched by that of another internal audience, again drawn from Homer. Like King Alcinous (*Od.* 9–12), a foreign king listens to a hero recount his adventures:

> Αἰσονίδης μέν οἱ γενεὴν καὶ οὔνομ' ἑκάστου
> σφωιτέρων μυθεῖθ' ἑτάρων, Πελίαό τ' ἐφετμάς,
> ἠδ' ὡς Λημνιάδεσσιν ἐπεξεινοῦντο γυναιξίν,
> ὅσσα τε Κύζικον ἀμφὶ Δολιονίην τ' ἐτέλεσσαν,
> Μυσίδα θ' ὡς ἀφίκοντο Κίον θ' ὅθι κάλλιπον ἥρω

[28] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 118; and Hunter, "Apollo and the Argonauts," 51.

Ἡρακλέην ἀέκοντι νόῳ· Γλαύκοιό τε βάξιν
πέφραδε, καὶ Βέβρυκας ὅπως Ἄμυκόν τ' ἐδάιξαν·
καὶ Φινῆος ἔειπε θεοπροπίας τε δύην τε,
ἠδ' ὡς Κυανέας πέτρας φύγον, ὥς τ' ἀβόλησαν
Λητοΐδῃ κατὰ νῆσον.

(2.762–71)

The son of Aeson recounted to him the lineage and the name of each
of his comrades, the commands of Pelias,
how they were entertained by the women of Lemnos,
and what they did in Dolonian Cyzicus,
and how they came to Mysia and Cius, where they left the hero
Heracles unwillingly; and he told the words of Glaucus
and how they slew the Bebrycians and Amycus;
and he told the prophecies of Phineus and his woe,
and how they escaped the Cyanean Rocks
and how they met the son of Leto on an island.

Apollonius pays ironic tribute to the Homeric performance in this scene. Odysseus was alone and without identification; Jason is vouched for by almost 50 Argonauts. Odysseus won the interest of his hosts by his prowess; Jason is welcomed as the comrade of Polydeuces, the slayer of Lycus' enemy, Amycus (2.752–58). Hearing Odysseus' story in full and in the first person, Homer's audience was encouraged to imagine itself in Odysseus' presence. In sharp contrast, Jason's story is given only in a third-person synopsis.

At first the summary of Jason's account seems a condensation of the *Argonautica*. Both he and the narrator begin with a catalogue of heroes, but for different reasons. The narrator assembles the heroes in a catalogue because he writes an epic poem; Jason performs the social function of introducing his comrades to Lycus.[29] The parallel between them reinforces the difference between experience lived and narrated. In Homer, words and experience are unified. If given in full, the hero's summarized account would coincide with Homer's account.[30] This is

---

[29] Fränkel, *Noten*, 31, 230.

[30] In general, Odysseus had the same mind as his creator. He knew everything that concerned himself, as Jason clearly does not. Odysseus learned about the gods' council, where it was decided to punish his men for eating the cattle of the Sun (*Od.* 12.389–90). Ancient scholars were puzzled by Odysseus' knowledge of the gods' discussion (scholia *Il.* 3.277; *Od.* 5.79, from Hunter, *Literary Studies*, 143).

This is not to say that Odysseus did not toy with narrative. After reading Apollonius, one becomes sensitive to Odysseus' ability to manipulate narrative. The Laestrygonians, savage cannibals (*Od.* 10.76–132), grimly mirrored the gentle and hospitable Phaeacians. Like Nausicaa, the Laestrygonian princess was engaged on a household errand when met by the Greeks. Like Odysseus, the Greeks were directed to the palace, where they first met the queen, a loathsome giantess, and then the cannibal king. It is possible that Odysseus included these details to flatter his royal hosts. They could see in the mirror of his narrative a royal family whose savagery made their own sophisti-

not the case with Apollonius, however. Jason's account cannot be identical to the story we have been reading. He does not know the fate of the men of Lemnos, or the undignified appearance of Heracles' exit, or Phineus' malice, or Apollo's rejection of the story. Because he will later shape a story to suit his own purposes (3.997–1004, below, pp. 121–22), he may leave out the fact that the men killed in battle on Cyzicus were friends. By summarizing the events of the *Argonautica* from Jason's flawed perspective, the poet offers still photographs of the voyage, but photographs taken by an unreliable photographer, who either fails to see events or deliberately distorts them. Instead of giving Jason's version, Apollonius has the reader work out what it would be. Again, he has us write the poem.

This is the literate answer to the omniscient Homer as represented by the Odysseus. The physical presence of the oral poet gives authority to the story. Even when a notorious liar like Odysseus is the narrator, one senses that, though he lies to everyone in the poem, he will still keep faith with the audience. The difference between Jason's account and that of Odysseus reflects the contrast between the book and performance. Far from letting us think we hear the words of a Bronze Age hero, Apollonius has us work out what these words are. When we consider the poem from Jason's flawed point of view, it takes on another dimension. The poet engages us in his book by having us compose it for him. Thus the temporal gulf between the reader and Apollonius vanishes as we join him in creating the story. By exposing the gulf and having the reader close it, Apollonius gives an inner life to the world inside the poem.

Because the heroes and the audience shared the same point of view in Homer, Alcinous' praise of Odysseus was supposed to draw a similar response from Homer's audience. With the Homeric precedent, Lycus has the authority to evaluate what he has heard on the reader's behalf. Lycus is charmed by the story, but distressed at the absence of Heracles (2.772). Because Heracles was the focus of epic ambitions inside the poem, Lycus' distress should be understood in the context of the literary debate. Moreover, his wording, "having wandered away from the help of such a man" (οἵου φωτὸς ἀποπλαγχθέντες ἀρωγῆς, 2.774), goes beyond the difficulties the Argonauts will experience without Heracles. It implies a literary judgment as well. As in Book 1, a parallel is drawn between events and and narrative. Earlier, the narrator "wandered" from the story, i.e., digressed; inside the story Heracles "wandered away"

cated hospitality shine all the more brightly. Moreover, when Homer gave a synopsis of the story Odysseus told Penelope in full, his listeners may have assumed that his story, expanded to full length, did not emphasize his affairs with goddesses.

from the story (1.1325), i.e., departed. Lycus adds a new twist by saying it was the Argonauts who "wandered away" (2.774). Lycus' view is corroborated a little later when the same word is used of other heroes abandoned by Heracles (ἀποπλαγχθέντες, 2.957). According to the people within the poem, the real story is with Heracles. Everyone else has wandered away. We are all adrift—narrator, heroes, and reader—following the wrong path of song. The last three books of the *Argonautica*, according to this view, can be construed as a long digression from the story of Heracles.

Modeled on Alcinous and favoring Heracles, Lycus represents the Telchinian party. This would not be disastrous in itself, since the narrator deliberately has undermined the epic form, but the Callimachean side also rejects the poem when Apollo walks out. This devastating criticism is specious, occurring not at the end, but in the middle of the poem. Only those readers able to assert themselves against such important authorities can forge a new path, and slip like the Argo past both barriers into a new ocean of poetry.

We are drawn into a critical search within the poem for answers to the poem's double nature. The characters are involved as well, enacting the literary struggle, choosing sides, demonstrating the results of their choice. Pulled apart by each faction, the poem appears to be heading toward failure. In the literary quarrel, the narrator is just another character. Against him are ranged a nameless Argonaut, who disparaged Polydeuces' victory; Lycus, who lamented the loss of Heracles; and Apollo, who walked out. Neither the heroes nor the implied reader is pleased, but, when the narrator fails, the poet succeeds. Apollonius allows dissatisfaction to be voiced, for he is confident he will be vindicated in a close reading.

CHAPTER SIX

LITERARY TERMS

The act of reading draws on the cognitive skills of separating and combining. Ancient readers had to separate words from the continuum of letters on a line since words were not divided from one another. Then the individual words had to be combined to form sentences. Apollonius points to the unconscious processes of separating and combining involved in reading by presenting reality, representation, and reception in terms of separation and continuity. Separation is expressed through the verb *diakrinô*, "separate," and its derivative, the adverb *diakridon*, "separatively"; combination is expressed through the adjective *diênekes*, "continuous," together with its adverb, *diênekeôs*, "continuously." Among their many applications in the poem, these terms allude to the contrast between the book and the Homeric performance. *Diakrinô*, "separate," can have the transferred meaning of "read" (*AP* 7.465), while *diênekes*, "continuous," is a word Callimachus connected with Homeric poetry (*Ait.* 1.1.3).

Ironically, Callimachus denotes Homeric poetry with a word disclaimed by Homer's narrators. They refuse to tell their stories "continuously," in the sense of "all the way through" (διηνεκέως, *Od.* 4.836, 7.241, 12.56). Callimachus insists that this discursiveness is the hallmark of Homeric poetry. In the *Argonautica*, both the narrator himself and Phineus, the narrator's agent, use the term to describe the style they reject. As in Homer, the term means "all the way through," and denotes a manner that the narrator refuses to adopt; as in Callimachus, the term means "in the Homeric manner," that is, naïve. After the narrator has told his account of the Lemnian massacre, he digresses on the subject of Aethalides, the Argonauts' messenger (1.640–51), a son of Hermes, who alone retains his memory after death. He breaks off with these words:

'Αλλὰ τί μύθους
Αἰθαλίδεω χρειώ με διηνεκέως ἀγορεύειν;
(1.648–49)

But why must I
recount stories of Aethalides *diênekeôs*, all the way through?

If the narrator's tone is critical, why does he not remove the passage, rather than draw attention to his failure to tell a story properly? Rather

than self-criticism, the question is posed as a riddle, so that by getting involved with its answer the reader may come to the poet's defense.[1] The point of his question seems to be that he is writing in the "continuous" style that Callimachus identified as Homeric (*Ait.* frag. 1.5). It has been suggested that the narrator refers specifically to the anecdotal manner of Homer, who rarely introduces characters without telling stories about them.[2]

Further interpretation comes from within the poem. The narrator's apology for his epic manner points ahead to the Homeric gloss that spreads over the episode. The narrative separates into two strata, defined by literary opposition. The style is Homeric in its panoramic view and anti-Homeric in its detail. The Lemnians hold an assembly, in the best Homeric manner, but everything is wrong with the picture. The elders sit together, as they should, but they are elderly women; an elder stands up to make a proposal, but she is a nurse; she proposes a sexual liaison rather than battle; and the roar of approval that greets her proposal is the roar of feminine voices, all of them eager to meet men in sexual combat.[3] This typically Homeric scene with the wrong elements is followed by another feature of Homeric narrative, a repeated speech. After the assembly of women-at-arms has unanimously approved the motion to go to bed with the Argonauts, Queen Hypsipyle sends off Iphinoe with a message:

> "῎Ορσο μοι, Ἰφινόη, τοῦδ᾽ ἀνέρος ἀντιόωσα
> ἡμέτερον δὲ μολεῖν ὅς τις στόλου ἡγεμονεύει,
> ὄφρα τί οἱ δήμοιο ἔπος θυμηδὲς ἐνίσπω·
> καὶ δ᾽ αὐτοὺς γαίης τε καὶ ἄστεος, αἴ κ᾽ ἐθέλωσι,
> κέκλεο θαρσαλέως ἐπιβαινέμεν εὐμενέοντας."
>
> (1.703–7)

> "Arise, Iphinoe, to ask this man,
> whoever is in charge of the expedition, to come to our home
> so that I may tell him the will of the people, which will please him;
> and invite his men, if they wish, to step boldly
> on the land and in the city, as friends."

---

[1] His riddling manner is in the Callimachean spirit (cf. Pfeiffer, *Callimachus*, Vol. 2, *Testimonia* 26, 41, 85, 89, 90). Fränkel points out the erudition Apollonius requires of the reader ("Apollonius Rhodius as a Narrator," 155).

[2] George, "Poet and Characters," 54.

[3] Arend, *Typischen Scenen*, 116–21, 128. Following the lead of the scholiast at 1.669, who notices an echo to an assembly in the *Odyssey* (*Od.* 2.16), Clauss has drawn out the parallels between this assembly and the Homeric one (*The Best of the Argonauts*, 118–19). Like Telemachus, Hypsipyle calls the assembly and sits on her father's throne; the aged nurse with her four attendants resembles the aged Aegyptus with his four sons. The subject of both assemblies is an invading army. One might add that the invaders of the *Odyssey* are supposed to be suitors, whereas the invaders of Lemnos prove to be suitors.

After an interval of only four lines, Iphinoe dutifully repeats the queen's words:

> "Κούρη τοί μ' ἐφέηκε Θοαντιὰς ἐνθάδ' ἰοῦσαν
> Ὑψιπύλη καλέειν νηὸς πρόμον ὅς τις ὄρωρεν,
> ὄφρα τί οἱ δήμοιο ἔπος θυμηδὲς ἐνίσπῃ·
> καὶ δ' αὐτοὺς γαίης τε καὶ ἄστεος, αἴ κ' ἐθέλητε,
> κέκλεται αὐτίκα νῦν ἐπιβαινέμεν εὐμενέοντας."
> (1.712–16)

> "Hypsipyle, daughter of Thoas, has sent me to come here
> to invite the leader of the ship, whoever he is,
> so that she may tell him the will of the people, which will please him;
> and she invites his men, if you wish,
> to step now at once on the land and in the city, as friends."

Iphinoe's speech characterizes the open, leisurely style of Homeric narrative, as when Zeus gave Iris a message for Poseidon that she repeated word for word (*Il.* 15.158–83).[4] Homeric pride in narrative accuracy was reflected in the repeated messenger-speeches; the Alexandrians found these speeches naïve.[5] Repetitiousness implies that poet and audience are willing to speak and hear the same thing twice. Apollonius uses verbal repetition sparingly, and for resonance. By repeating the last three lines of Hypsipyle's speech, the narrator mocks Homer's lack of interest in the subtleties of human character as manifested in diction. The narrator is too Alexandrian to permit word-for-word repetition, however. Besides the necessary changes in the personal endings of verbs, Iphinoe replaces Hypsipyle's "boldly," with the more urgent "now at once."[6] Despite the humor of Iphinoe's

---

[4] The evocation of Homeric epic is pointed out by Fränkel, *Noten*, 98, n. 188, and Vian, *Argonautiques I*, 25. For the principle of *poikilia* among Alexandrian poets, see L. Deubner, "Ein Stilprinzip hellenistischer Dichtkunst," *NJA*, 47 (1921), 361–78. For the rarity of repeated lines and phrases in Apollonius, see Fränkel, *Noten*, 98; G. W. Elderkin, "Repetition in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius," *AJP*, 34 (1913), 198–201. Collins ("Studies," 61) suggests that the scene is intended to recall the moment when Iris summoned Helen from her weaving to watch the duel fought by Paris and Menelaus in her honor (*Il.* 3.125–38). At that moment Helen was depicting battle scenes of the Trojan War on her δίπλαξ, "double-sided cloak"—the word is used for Jason's cloak as well (1.722). Her pictures have a thematic connection to the surrounding narrative of the *Iliad*, just as Jason's cloak is thematically connected to the *Argonautica*. This particular scene goes against Homeric practice because Iris arrived without any god's having sent her. Collins suggests that Apollonius pointedly alludes to Homer's repeated messenger-speeches by echoing the one place in Homer where a messenger-speech is not repeated.

[5] Van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia*, Part 2, 36–40.

[6] In the *Hymn to Aphrodite*, Anchises pressed Aphrodite, disguised as a shy maiden, to join him in his hut αὐτίκα νῦν (151). If Apollonius alludes to this line specifically, it has special point, because, like Anchises, the Argonauts are sexually exploited by aggressive women. The Alexandrian audience, knowing Apollonius, will have read the

editorial change, Apollonius' sudden mimicry of the Homeric voice is startling and unique to this passage.

More specific commentary on the narrator's question occurs at the end of the episode, where Jason passes on *diênekeôs*, "continuously" the words of Hypsipyle (1.847). Iphinoe is actually shown repeating the queen's speech to the Argonauts, and the similarity of situation implies that Jason, like Iphinoe, passes Hypsipyle's story to his men without editing or altering her words. Consequently, Hypsipyle's words are repeated verbatim to the Argonauts both by her messenger and by the man she has marked for her bed. The repeated speeches of Homer's characters, evoked by the speech of Iphinoe, give the additional meaning of "word for word" to the term *diênekeôs*, "continuously" when Jason later passes on the queen's version of events.

Iphinoe's repetition means that she is doing her job properly; Jason's that he is not. As leader, he ought to know better than to pass on to the Argonauts Hypsipyle's explanation. His naïve repetition of her story parallels Homer's own naïve style.[7] The word *diênekeôs* also connects Jason's mistake to the narrator's implied self-criticism. Compare the narrator's question—

Ἀλλὰ τί μύθους
Αἰθαλίδεω χρειώ με διηνεκέως ἀγορεύειν;
(1.648–49)

But why must I recount stories
of Aethalides *diênekeôs*, all the way through?

—with the description of Jason:

... μῦθον ὅτ' ἤδη πάντα διηνεκέως ἀγόρευσε
τόν ῥα καλεσσαμένη διεπέφραδεν Ὑψιπύλεια.
(1.847–48)

... when he recounted to them all the way through (*diênekeôs*),
the whole story which Hypsipyle told him, having summoned him.

Mythous, "stories," is echoed by *mython*, "story"; *diênekeôs* is repeated; and *agoreuein*, "to tell," is echoed by *agoreuse*, "he told." Clearly, Apollonius intends the reader to connect Jason's innocent repetition of Hypsipyle's story with the narrator's question.[8] Yet the connection

---

repetitions guardedly, on the lookout for the alteration that could slip by an unwary reader. See Hurst for the interplay between the *mode naïf* and the *mode savant* (*Manière et cohérence*, 20–35).

[7] Elsewhere, Jason's narrative technique is criticized. When he tells his adventures to Lycus ἑξείης, "in succession" (2.771), the use of that word implies that Jason can only order events chronologically. Phineus, who scolds himself for speaking διηνεκές, also refuses to speak ἑξείης (2.314).

[8] George, "Poet and Characters," 54–60.

is mysterious. The narrator's self-criticism does not allude in an obvious way to anything repeated verbatim.

Aethalides is a herald, the male counterpart of the Lemnian herald Iphinoe, who repeats the queen's speech word for word.[9] When the narrator criticizes himself for telling "stories of Aethalides" *diênekeôs*, he seems at first to mean the story that Aethalides kept his memory in the underworld. "Stories," in that case, are a generalizing plural. When we read the echo of his self-criticism in his criticism of Jason, we become aware that *Aithalideo*, "of Aethalides," could also be a subjective genitive, with Aethalides the source of the story. That is, the narrator passes along Aethalides' story just as Jason passes along Hypsipyle's. "Stories" can refer to two separate stories: the version of the Lemnian men—which Aethalides learned from meeting them in Hades—and the story of his reincarnation with his memory intact—which enabled him to divulge the men's story.[10] Aethalides can be the source of the story from the male point of view about the women's crime. The narrator, who blindly accepts Aethalides' version of events, is no less culpable than Jason, who blindly accepts Hypsipyle's.

Apollonius has essentially argued his position as a literary critic by exposing "continuous" narrative as naïve and careless. Yet he does so by allowing his poem to lapse into the very style he criticizes. Confusion could well result from a poetic method that alternately lets epic gallop and then pulls back on its reins. Indeed, Apollonius does encourage a clamor of diverse opinions from his characters and even from the reader. The self-conscious doubt implied in the criticisms of the poem demands the reader's participation. On Lemnos, Apollonius gives the reader a lesson on how to combine and separate stories through the two versions—the narrator's and the queen's—concerning the Lemnian massacre (1.609–32, 793–826).

Framing the episode, these two stories give an illusion of truth because each has offered a different perspective on the same event. Offering the standard version, the narrator implies that the women of Lemnos will resemble the grim and frightening women of Greek tragedy. Their fury at the insult to their marriage-beds recalls Medea's rage in Euripides' tragedy (*Med.* 265–66, 555–56); their revenge foreshadows her vengeance on Jason.[11] The Lemnian women murder

[9] Ibid., 54 n. 2.

[10] For Aethalides' subsequent incarnations, see Fränkel, who cites Diogenes Laertius 8.1.4, Aulus Gellius 4.11.14 (*Noten*, 93–95). On one of these occasions it is said that he lived as the philosopher Pythagoras.

[11] Euripides invented the story that Medea murdered her children to avenge herself on Jason, according to Denys L. Page, *Medea* (Oxford, 1952), xxi–xxv; for more recent arguments in favor of Euripides' innovation, see Emily A. McDermott, *Euripides'*

not just their husbands and the Thracian concubines, but all the males on the island including children. They do not make Clytemnestra's mistake of allowing Orestes to live. Having conjured up the more frightening examples of female violence, the narrator compares them to Maenads, who eat raw flesh (1.636), like the demonic Bacchae described by Euripides. The Argonauts may well meet the fate of Pentheus.

In telling two very different accounts of the events on Lemnos the previous year, Apollonius allows the narrator's view to be contradicted within the poem. The difference between what is told about the women of Lemnos and what is shown manifests itself in the difference between the narrator's story and Hypsipyle's.[12] The narrator has presented the Lemnian women as murderesses, but they expose the falseness of his presentation. Seen up close, they are charming. From their point of view, the event of the previous year is not a cruel massacre, but a desperate attempt to correct a terrible situation.

Hypsipyle's story to Jason is in counterpoint to the narrator's. On the one hand, she agrees with many of the facts presented: the wrath of Aphrodite (1.614–15, 802–803); the men's infatuation with Thracian slave women, and their consequent neglect of the citizen women (1.611–14, 804–19). On the other hand, they differ in describing the women's retaliation, which the narrator calls "outrageous behavior," and Hypsipyle "excessive boldness" (1.609, 820). The stories diverge both in emphasis and in fact. Whereas the narrator stresses the horror of the deed and blames the women (1.616), Hypsipyle details the suffering that led up to it and blames the men (1.807). The narrator gives a summation of the women's distress when the men fell in love with Thracian concubines. Hypsipyle, telling the event from the women's point of view, details the women's sufferings and creates empathy for them. The narrator's distortion of emphasis fits perfectly with Hypsipyle's distortion of fact. She relates the fiction that the men of Lemnos were locked out of the city until they had learned to behave (1.822). The narrator describes a brutal massacre, which Hypsipyle transforms into a lesson in manners.

Hypsipyle drops hints about where the men really are, hints intelligible to the privileged reader, if not to Jason. First, she says ambiguously

---

Medea: The Incarnation of Disorder (London, 1981), 9–24. In any case, representations of her infanticide in art indicate that Euripides' version drove the others out (Page, lvii–lxviii; Leonidas, *A.P.* 9.345–46).

[12] George, "Poet and Characters," 59. Pavlock suggests that the differences in the two stories bring out the differences in the male and female perspectives (*Eros, Imitation and the Epic Tradition*, 46–48,).

that Aphrodite brought upon the men a "soul-destroying madness" or "life-destroying doom" (θυμοφθόρος ἄτη, 1.803).[13] Using a chilling metaphor, she tells Jason that the Lemnian men now inhabit the "snowy plowland of Thrace" (ἄροσις χιονώδης, 1.826).[14] According to the dominant imagery of this episode, women's bodies merged with the earth, and plowing symbolizes sexual intercourse.[15] The "snowy plowland of Thrace," then, alludes both to the murdered Thracian concubines and to the dead men who once "plowed" them. Through these subtle allusions to the truth, Hypsipyle seems to address her remarks to an inner self rather than to Jason. She evidently regards the shocking murder with amused detachment.

The two versions of the same story, contradicting and complementing each other, illustrate Apollonius' technique of separative narrative. The same story when told from two monocular points of view gives an illusion of three-dimensionality because it is looked at from two points of view. When the narrator first relates the story of Lemnos, he relies on the single perspective offered by the tradition handed down by Aethalides. That is, he adopts the Homeric stance and offers his version as the whole truth—a position that the poet wishes us to challenge. Through the verbal echoes connecting the narrator's self-criticism with the narrator's criticism of Jason's naïveté, Apollonius warns the reader that the narrator offers only one point of view, and an unreliable one. When the women's side of the story is included, the reader is left to combine the two versions into a third story that appears realistic because it is seen from two points of view. The true story, if the word *true* can appropriately be applied to a work of fiction, is filtered from the tales of unreliable characters and an equally unreliable narrator. Apollonius' convoluted style, with its ironic detachment from the narrator's reliability, leads the reader to circle the event in an attempt to discover the truth. At the same time he emphasizes that truth cannot be contained in any single story. There is no naïve harmony here. By questioning himself, the poet invites doubt and consequently the reader's participation in creating the story.

In the first major adventure of the poem, the narrator's and Hypsipyle's stories, told "continuously," frame the description of Jason's cloak. The pictures on the cloak are woven *diakridon*, "separatively" so that they stand out from the cloak in a three-dimensional space (1.729). In the

---

[13] Fränkel notes the ambiguity (*Noten*, 108).

[14] Levin points out that ἔτι νῦν, "still now" (1.825), used of the Lemnian men's continued residence in Thrace, has an etiological ring suggestive of verisimilitude jarring to the experienced reader (*Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, 78, n. 2).

[15] See above, p. 56 and n. 20.

Argonauts' first major adventure, Apollonius sets the ideas of combination and separation in dynamic opposition to each other. The idea of separation, moreover, connects the pictures on the cloak with another form of art, the song. On the night before the voyage began, Orpheus sang how the universe was created when earth, sky, and sea separated from one another, *diekrithen* (1.498). The verbal echo also catches the essential difference between narrative and pictorial art. Narrative describes events moving through time; pictures show an event frozen in time. The song describes elements in the process of separating, the pictures illustrate the product of separation.

As the *Argonautica* takes shape, Orpheus sings a theogony, which begins with the creation of the universe:

> Ἤειδεν δ' ὡς γαῖα καὶ οὐρανὸς ἠδὲ θάλασσα,
> τὸ πρὶν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι μιῇ συναρηρότα μορφῇ,
> νείκεος ἐξ ὀλοοῖο διέκριθεν ἀμφὶς ἕκαστα . . . .
>
> (1.496–98)

> He sang that earth and sky and sea,
> once fitted together in a single form,
> each separated in different directions after deadly strife . . . .

Orpheus' account of the creation evokes Empedocles' theory that the universe alternately comes together through love and separates through strife's hatred (νείκεος ἔχθει, frag. 17.8 Diels-Kranz).[16] While Orpheus presents a history of the universe, Apollonius presents a history of poetry and his own place within the tradition. The conceit is well known, that art mirrors nature. For the Greeks this conceit had special meaning: the Greek word for poet, ποιητής, means "creator" or "maker." As art mirrors nature, the laws governing art will somehow mirror the laws governing the natural world. Existing in a literary universe, Orpheus sings about its origin, the invention of writing. The Homeric allusion is instructive. The condition of the world at the start of Orpheus' song reflects the world depicted on the shield made by Hephaestus. The three elements—earth, sky, and sea—coincide with the first three elements on the shield:

> Ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ', ἐν δ' οὐρανόν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν . . . .
>
> (*Il.* 18.483)

---

[16] Mooney, *The Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*, *ad loc.* Vian, *Argonautiques I*, *ad. loc.*, gives parallels from earlier poems. For Empedocles, see M. R. Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments* (New Haven, 1981). Ancient critics viewed the two cities on Achilles' shield as allegories of the Empedoclean principles of strife and love: see P. R. Hardie, "*Imago Mundi*: Cosmological and Ideological Aspects of the Shield of Achilles," *JHS*, 105 (1985), 15–16.

On it he fashioned earth, sky, and sea ... .

The allusion to the Homeric passage instructs the reader that the physical principles governing the universe also relate to poetry.

Hephaestus puts the earth, the sky, and the sea into the picture, whereas Orpheus presents these same elements as separating from one another. Homer's artist depicts a universe already completed; Apollonius' poet describes a universe just being born. The same elements in the same order behave differently depending on whether they are found in an oral poem or a literary one. Grammar underscores the difference. In Homer's account, the god takes the elements, conveniently in the accusative case, and puts them into his picture. In Apollonius' account, the elements are free-standing, in the "upright," nominative case. It is implied that they determine for themselves their position in the cosmos. Moreover, a flat shield is contrasted with a three-dimensional universe, as the elements move apart from one another through three-dimensional space. In stressing three-dimensionality, Apollonius shows his Hellenistic bent, because the artists of his time were concerned with creating dynamic tension within a two-dimensional space.[17]

Unlike Empedocles, Orpheus, shows the universe born from separation, not love. In a written document, Orpheus tells a history of the book, which to him is the universe. The poet, poem, and audience, formerly brought together in a dramatic performance, diverge from one another to form a new universe, the written text. They also fit the elements named in Orpheus' song. The sea was given associations with the realm of the poet by Callimachus, for whom it signified Homeric poetry (*H. Ap.* 2.106). This association is maintained in the *Argonautica*, where the sea is shallow, and the path cut by the boat looks Callimachean (above, p. 45). The other two realms have a more ancient affinity with characters and observers. The spectators of the *Iliad* are the gods, always feasting and usually watching the events on the earth.[18] Their realm is the sky, from where they look down with a panoramic and piercing vision. The earth, in turn, is the scene of the characters' struggle and death. The two realms of characters and spectators—earth and sky—are blocked off when their deities merge (*Il.* 14.346–51).[19] When Hera seduces Zeus to prevent him from

---

[17] Onians, *Art and Thought in the Hellenistic Age*, 40–46; Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, 48.

[18] Griffin, "The Divine Audience," 11–14.

[19] To be sure, the flowers and the cloud have a religious significance as well, since they symbolize the sacred marriage of earth and sky. See Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (Cambridge, 1985), 108. O'Brien sees an allusion to Earth's veil of spring flowers (*The Transformation of Hera*, 183).

watching the battle, the earth as goddess sends up a carpet of flowers that hides the soil. At the same time, the couple is hidden by the golden cloud Zeus has created above them. As they embrace, they are invisible to the gods in the sky above and oblivious to the battle on the earth below. They are closed off from the world of the spectators and that of the characters.

Apollonius seems to give narratological meaning to the separation of the earth and sky when he describes Cronus' castration of Uranus. As a preface to the story, he apologizes to the Muses. Perhaps, he feels they might dislike the story because of its ugliness (4.984–86).[20] Yet, The Muses would surely not have been offended by the content of the song, since they themselves taught it to Hesiod when they met him on Mt. Helicon (*Theog.* 176–82). If the separation implies the invention of the book, however, the Muses might find the subject very painful. The prestige of the Muses considerably diminished when poets ignored them and turned instead to books for inspiration. The bards were replaced by writers who researched the old songs; the Muses are locked up in the Alexandrian Library, called the Museum.[21]

In Homeric epic, the poet, the hero, and his audience were all present in a single performance. The three worlds of narrative were unified in space and time. Apollonius has Orpheus allude obliquely to the unity of the Homeric scheme, when the three worlds—earth, sky, and sea—are joined in a single form (1.496). In Apollonius' literary world, the elements—poet, reader, and heroes—are divided by space and by the ever-widening gulf of time. Metaphorically, this is called strife in Orpheus' song. When the narrators, readers, and heroes interact, strife has an obvious application to the poem. The narrator's distaste for epic poetry is matched by the distaste of the heroes and internal audiences for the direction taken by poem. The narrator and heroes are engaged in combat and the reader sides against them both. The loss of Heracles, which causes dissatisfaction on both sides of the papyrus, is foreshadowed through this image of separation. He and a few others are "separated," *diakrithentes*, from the Argonauts' heterosexual revels on Lemnos (1.856).

Homer's shield is evoked in the second artifact described by Apollonius. Jason, clad in a cloak made by Athena, is the poet's answer to the hero of the *Iliad*.[22] Lemnos, where Jason wears the cloak, brings to

---

[20] According to Hunter, Apollonius "allows himself to enjoy the object of his distaste" (*Literary Studies*, 113).

[21] See above, chap. 3, n. 11.

[22] For other connections between the song of Orpheus and the cloak of Jason, see below, chap. 9, n. 1.

mind Hephaestus, who was highly honored there. A jingling rhyme connects the two god-made objects: *triplaka marmareên/ diplaka porphyreên*: "threefold, brilliant" (τρίπλακα μαρμαρέην, *Il.* 18.480)/ "a purple cloak" (δίπλακα πορφυρέην, *Arg.* 1.722).[23]

Both Homer's shield and Apollonius' cloak are emblematic of the surrounding narrative. On the shield made by Hephaestus, the contrast between the city at war and the city at peace reflects the contrast between Troy's present and its past.[24] A scholiast suggests that the city at peace reminds the Trojans of their former life; the city at war reminds them of their present condition (*Il.* 18.483). The city at peace, with its harmonious activities, finds a place in the narrative proper of the *Iliad* in allusions and images. Events achieve an emotional depth through contrast with Troy's happier past. Running for his life, Hector passes by the hot springs where once the women washed clothes (*Il.* 22.145–56). The similes also sustain the memory of the peaceful world the Trojans enjoyed before the Greeks arrived. They remind the audience that the deadly battlefield was once a rich plowland.

According to an ancient commentator, Jason's cloak symbolizes Apollonius' world view, and one feels instinctively it should.[25] The scenes depicted on the cloak allude allegorically to major themes of the *Argonautica*: the victory of art over force, together with the moral compromises implied by such a victory.[26] The processes of separation and combination are woven into the text of the poem through the image of weaving.[27] In the *Argonautica*, the line of the plot threads its way between the literary poles of Callimachus and Homer. Apollonius shows the reader both the process of the story, with the two sets of threads pulling apart, and the final picture, with the two sets of

---

[23] Hunter, *Literary Studies*, 53.

[24] Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem*, Vol. 4, 530, lines 9–12. For Homer's likeness to Hephaestus, see Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation and the Epic Tradition*, 31. For the poignant contrast between Troy's past and present as emphasized through the similes and the two cities on Achilles' shield, see O. Taplin, "The Shield of Achilles within the *Iliad*," *G & R*, 27 (1980), 4, 14–15. For the poets' commenting on their own poetry through allusions to song, see Charles Segal, "The Song of Iopas in the *Aeneid*," *Hermes*, 99 (1971), 336–49, where he shows how Vergil weaves together allusions to the songs of Demodocus and Orpheus; and his "Vergil's Sixth *Eclogue* and the Problem of Evil," TAPA, 100 (1969), 427, where he points out the analogy between the wanderings of the poet and the wanderings of the things created.

[25] Wendel, *Scholia*, at 1.763–64a.

[26] Lawall, "Jason as Anti-Hero," 154–58.

[27] Pindar, *Ol.* 6.86–87; Bacchylides 5.9, 18.8; Callimachus frag. 26.5 (for more examples, see Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, 67–68). The similarities of the lyre to the loom and of the plectrum to the shuttle made possible the analogy between weaving and poetic composition. See J. M. Snyder, "The Web of Song. Weaving imagery in Homer and the Lyric poets," *CJ*, 76 (1981), 193–96.

opposing threads woven into a unity. By creating a dynamic opposition between reality and appearance, Apollonius captures the visual effect of weaving. When a weaver uses two contrasting colors and pulls one set of threads forward, that color takes over the surface while the other is hidden. Apollonius pulls forward a Homeric or anti-Homeric scene, so it covers the surface, and at the same time makes the reader aware of the opposing threads tugging in the opposite direction.

As a symbol, the cloak offers an excellent contrast between Apollonius' epic and Homer's. The cloak is supple, soft, three-dimensional, and kinetic, whereas the shield is rigid, hard, flat, and static. A purpose for the cloak is erotic, when used as a blanket shared by lovers (4.421–28); whereas the shield's purpose is only military.[28] Apollonius' cloak shows many unconnected scenes, whereas Homer's shield presents a unified vision.[29] The contrast between the god-made items reflects the difference between the epics, heroes, and poets. Although Homer's poems were performed before a live audience and in three-dimensional space, Apollonius implies that Homer's world is static, flat, and unified. Although the *Argonautica* is contained within the two-dimensional space of a papyrus, Apollonius implies that the world therein is dynamic, three-dimensional, and broken apart. His literary terms gather into one form the attributes of two. A painting is discontinuous, showing an instant in time, frozen and soundless. A story, on the other hand, is continuous, moving through time, invisible yet heard. Nowadays, films convey effortlessly what Apollonius asked the reader to create with hard work, the illusion of pictures endowed with movement and sound. If the reader can be tricked into seeing such an image, the poet succeeds.

Apollonius sets his book against the Homeric performance by holding up the idea of separation against the idea of continuous and repetitive. Separation also characterizes the reader's response. Circe, who purifies Jason and Medea for the murder of Medea's brother, is much shrewder than Jason. Like the Lemnian women, Medea is polluted with kindred murder, and like Hypsipyle, she tries to conceal the crime (4.736–37). Jason, who repeats Hypsipyle's story "continuously," never learns the truth. Circe questions Medea *diakridon*, "separatively," and figures out the true story (4.721). She can be said to "read" the situation because one transferred meaning of *diakrinô*,

---

[28] G. Zanker, *Realism in Alexandrian Poetry* (London, 1987), 75–76.

[29] Hunter, *Literary Studies*, 59. Pavlock points out that just as the narrator of the *Argonautica* does not have secure control over the material, so Athena does not understand the erotic scenes she has woven onto Jason's cloak (*Eros, Imitation and the Epic Tradition*, 31).

"separate," is "read."

The narrative of discontinuity suggests the discovery of truth through discrimination; Homeric narrative, according to Apollonius' satiric presentation, signals the assumption that truth can be found in a single, shared perspective. Homeric narrative is the literature of blind faith, naïvely presupposing the unity of poet, characters, and audience. Far from pretending to achieve a Homeric unity, Apollonius exploits a disunity. Drawn into creating a third and true story, the reader is deceived as this story, too, is a fiction, existing only in the mind. For Apollonius, unity is never assumed as the starting point of poetry. He does not ask for blind acceptance. The sharp-eyed Circe is his model reader, not Apollo and King Lycus.

In a subtle evocation of Homer, Apollonius weaves into his story the two cities presented as pictures on Hephaestus' shield. In the Argonauts' first two adventures, on Lemnos and Cyzicus, he presents a city at peace and one at war. The Lemnian women, always fearful of an attack from Thrace, assume that the Argonauts are enemies, and rush in armor to the shore (1.630–38). The men of Cyzicus, apprehensive of an attack from the mainland, assume the Argonauts are invaders and also rush to the shore (1.1022–52). On Lemnos, battle is followed by hospitality; on Cyzicus, hospitality by battle. The city of Lemnos is filled with festivals (1.857–58); the city of Cyzicus with anguished cries (1.1051–52). Seen from a distance, the cities on Lemnos and Cyzicus freeze into the very picture on Hephaestus' shield.

Through an extension of their meanings, the terms "discontinuous" and "continuous" also describe the two different kinds of plot that Apollonius employs: "continuous," when events are joined by a chain of logical or psychological causality; "discontinuous," when events are connected only by time and geography. Aristotle distinguishes between two types of plot, motivated and unmotivated (*Poet.* 1451b).[30] In the former, events grow through probability; in the latter, events follow one another connected only by time. Apollonius combines both kinds of plot for a deliberately artistic effect.

These types of plot-construction fit with the description of the Argo:

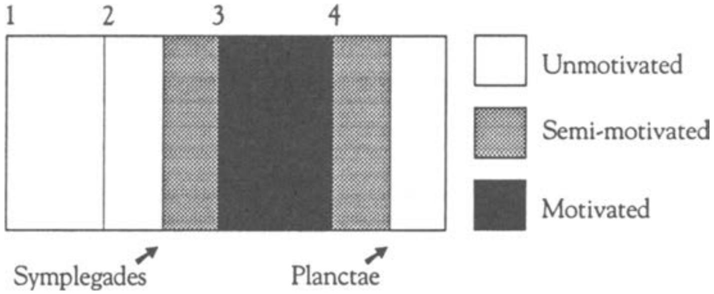
> "Ἶσον δ' ἐξ ἀνέμοιο θέει καὶ ὅτ' ἀνέρες αὐτοὶ
> νωλεμέως χείρεσσιν ἐπισπέρχωσιν ἐρετμοῖς."
>
> (3.345–46)
>
> "Equally it runs by the wind and when the men themselves
> press on unceasingly with hands and oars."

---

[30] Aristotle calls the unmotivated plot the worst kind; cf. the complaint of Eichgrün ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 84).

The Argo symbolizes the poem when it sinks under Heracles' feet or when it slips through the Symplegades likened to a book-roll. Its two forms of locomotion can be seen as analogous to the two kinds of plot the poet interlaces. At times, the story moves on its own power, with its events growing from the actions of the characters; at other times, by an outside force, the winds or divine intervention. The combination of the two forms of plot contributes to the sense of depth and intensity in Book 3.

The following diagram schematizes the *Argonautica*, according to the degrees of motivation. Up through the middle of Book 2, the Argonauts' adventures are connected in the story only by time and space. Events follow one another in chronological and geographical sequence like charms on a bracelet. When the Argonauts meet Phineus, just before they pass through the Symplegades, the plot changes from unmotivated to semi-motivated. From Phineus' prophecy in Book 2 to the wedding in Book 4, the narrative changes gradually from a sequence of unrelated events to a smooth, continuous surface. Then, just after the second set of magical rocks, the Planctae, Jason and Medea are forced into marriage. Thereupon, unmotivated narrative is resumed. The Argonauts are blown to North Africa and fortuitous adventures. Like book ends, the two sets of magical rocks frame the start and finish of the love story. The Argonauts pass through the Symplegades immediately after receiving instructions from Phineus. Once they pass through the Planctae, Jason and Medea are forced to marry on Scheria.



Degrees of Motivation within the *Argonautica*

Between the Symplegades and Planctae there is a clear symmetry between motivated and semi-motivated plots. The second part of Book 2 and the first part of Book 4 show an equal degree of motivation: time and geography determine events as well as their prior actions.[31] The Argonauts are welcomed by King Lycus because of their battle with the Bebrycians. More significant, they stop off at the Island of Ares under Phineus' instructions to pick up Medea's nephews. In the first part of Book 4, when the Argonauts flee with Medea, Jason is forced to murder her brother. For this crime, the couple is forced to seek a ritual cleansing from Circe.

Book 3 is set off from the previous and subsequent narrative by taking up a single papyrus roll. Invocations to the Muses at the openings of Books 3 and 4 (3.1–5, 4.1–5) help to separate Book 3 from the text on either side. Moreover, the events of Book 3 are completely motivated. They grow out of the Argonauts' meeting with the grandsons of Aeetes, which arouses his suspicions and out of Medea's infatuated desire for Jason. As well as letting events unfold according to psychological probability, the poet further sets off Book 3 in a more leisurely style of narrative. The other three books describe a voyage of several months with brief sojourns in various places. In Book 3, the Argonauts stay in Colchis. Time almost stops. Only three days pass, during which the Argonauts arrive, Jason and Medea meet, and Jason does the task assigned by Aeetes. The poet has space and leisure to set the action and develop his characters. Indeed, the events are so precisely organized that one has the illusion of knowing what everyone is doing and thinking at any moment. As the narrative slows down, the characters speak more lines and become more complex. Book 3 is more immediate as the only one lacking *aitia*, etiological stories, with their constant reminders of the time between that age and our own.[32] The experience is like looking at ruffled water, which suddenly clears and gives a glimpse into its depths.

The diagram shows the changes in plot-types. The story changes from unmotivated to semi-motivated, to motivated, over to semi-motivated, and finally back to unmotivated. Book 3 has the greatest degree of motivation. Changes in types of plot have markers, both external and internal: the magical rocks and the ends of papyrus rolls.

---

[31] Apollonius shows the world between the rocks as reflecting the world on either side. Prophets die just after the Symplegades (2.815–34) and after the Planctae (4.1502–36). Jason's slaying of King Cyzicus outside the two sets of rocks (1.1032–35) balances his murder of Absyrtus (4.464–67) between them. See Hunter, *Literary Studies*, 164; Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry*, 121–41.

[32] Hutchinson, *Hellenistic Poetry*, 93–95.

Using the analogy of film, one can imagine the story coming into focus gradually and then going out of focus again. Or, to press the analogy, the frames pass slowly at first so that one can see them individually, and then, as the projector speeds up, the frames join together in a continuous vision. Finally, they dissolve into unconnected frames again.

The magical rocks mark points where the narrative changes from unmotivated to motivated and back again; they also indicate alterations in the meaning of *diênekes*, "continuous." In the first part of the poem, up to the Symplegades, the term alludes connotatively to Homeric narrative. In the last section of the poem, after the Argonauts have passed through the Planctae, the word will connote something more complex (below, pp. 133–34). In between the two sets of magical rocks, the connotation shifts from Homeric to pseudo-Homeric, from heroic simplicity to a pose of heroic simplicity. The Homeric hero, epitomized by Achilles, is open and honest. Apollonius' Jason, after passing through the rocks, pretends to possess Homeric straightforwardness. In the first section, up until the Symplegades, the narrator has manipulated Homeric devices, which create an overlay on un-Homeric reality. As he approaches Colchis, Jason learns to give the appearance of a Homeric character.

After passing through the Symplegades, the Argonauts enter a ghastly landscape in which the laws governing society and gender roles have broken down. The landscape prepares the Argonauts for the eerie land of the Colchians, the most sinister people in the area.[33] Women warriors offer combat (2.962–1000); even in childbirth the Tibarenean men symbolically act out the women's role (2.1009–14). Even the chronology disintegrates as the Chalybians pound out their Iron-Age tools in an age ignorant of iron.[34] As they sail past Acheron, the river of death, Sthenelus emerges from the underworld to watch them go by (2.911–21). Without a word or gesture, he goes back into the gloom (2.921). His response is a ghostly equivalent to that of Lycus: with

---

[33] Lawall, "Jason as Anti-Hero," 159.

[34] For Homer's awareness that his heroes were ignorant of iron, see J. V. Luce, *Homer and the Heroic Age* (New York, 1975), 58–60. Ignorance of iron was thought to characterize the Bronze Age. M. L. West suggests that the Age of Heroes was inserted late into the system of metallurgical decline (it breaks the pattern of metals and the movement to the worse) because of the heroes' simultaneous knowledge and ignorance of iron (*Hesiod: Works and Days* [Oxford, 1978], 174). A scholiast mentions a tradition that certain unnamed scholars believed that the heroes did not know of iron and that, therefore, they should not be presented as using iron to slaughter animals (*Iliad* 23.30–31, Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem*, Vol. 5, 370). Apollonius is careful to give his characters only bronze implements: e.g., Hylas' pitcher (1.1236) and the shovels with which the Argonauts bury Mopsus (4.1532–33).

Heracles gone, the Argonauts are no longer interesting.

Paradoxically, once the reader has been dismissed, the narrative deepens and intensifies. From this point on, from the Argonauts' meeting with the sons of Phrixus (2.1090–1133) to the wedding of Jason and Medea in Book 4, the poem is held together by narrative continuity and psychological realism. Knowledge of how to read the *Argonautica* takes us deeper into the narrative as the characters' minds and thoughts become clear. No longer just an epic riddled with mishaps and disappointments, the *Argonautica* offers psychological insights into those who get caught up in the heroic dream. A double vision plays epic expectations against non-heroic reality.

Jason offers an example of pseudo-Homeric behavior when the Argonauts meet the sons of Phrixus shipwrecked on the Island of Ares. They are crucial to the story because their arrival at Colchis in the Argonauts' company results in Aeetes' savage rage and Medea's equally savage love. Their own story goes back a generation earlier. About to be sacrificed by their wicked stepmother, Phrixus and Helle were rescued by the golden ram, on whose back they escape to the Black Sea, although Helle's fatal fall gave her name to the Hellespont. Phrixus was carried safely to Colchis where he then married Aeetes' daughter Chalciope in return for Golden Fleece. After Phrixus's death, his sons decided to return to Greece. Shipwrecked on the island of Ares, they are picked up by the Argonauts.

Until now, the policy of the Argonauts has been to sail along the coast without meeting any inhabitants.[35] The heroes refuse the challenge of the Amazons (2.985–86); nor do they examine the social mores of the Chalybians (2.1000–8), the Tibareni (2.1009–14), or the Mossynoeci (2.1015–29). Phineus has told them that an "benefit," awaits them on the island of Ares (2.388), and mindful of his instructions they stop there (ὄνεαρ, 2.1051). Just as Apollo's prophecies bring about death for Pelias and ruin for Jason, the prophet Phineus is not benevolent to his rescuers. Although meeting the grandsons of Aeetes might seem a stroke of good fortune, this encounter leads ultimately to Jason's destructive involvement with Medea.

A narrator's role in the story is often malicious because the sufferings of characters are chronicled for the audience's amusement. This is the Homeric formulation. Odysseus' "woes," his adventures, are a source of joy to the uninvolved audience, like the company of Phaeacians.[36]

---

[35] Eichgrün compares them unfavorably with Odysseus ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 99).

[36] Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 14–15.

Poets are not to blame for men's sufferings, Telemachus tells the shrewd Penelope when he puts the responsibility on the gods (*Od.* 1.346–49). Homer's audience, which heard Zeus disavow responsibility in the first scene of the poem (*Od.* 1.32–43), is in a position to see Telemachus' error. The poet's pay and audience's pleasure require that Penelope weep salt tears for many long nights.

Apollonius takes the Homeric notion a step further by emphasizing the malice of the narrator. Why, he asks rhetorically, does Phineus send the Argonauts to the island (2.1090–92)? Clearly, to bring grief to the characters. The sons of Phrixus, whom they meet there, both inflame the suspicions of Aeetes and help to further the love affair of Jason and Medea. Aeetes mistrusted his grandsons because an oracle warned him against members of his own family (3.594–605). Disregarding his daughters, Medea and Chalciope, and trusting his son, Absyrtus, Aeetes suspected his grandsons would cause him trouble and was glad when they left. Again, the sons of Phrixus enable Jason and Medea to meet. While Medea loves Jason, she feigns concern for her nephews as an excuse to intervene on the Argonauts' behalf (3.688–739). Later, when her love has burnt out, she will again use her nephews to excuse her behavior when she justifies herself to her aunt Circe (4.734–36).[37]

A more subtle effect of Phineus' prophecy is revealed in the unfolding of Jason's character. Up to this point, kindness has been Jason's outstanding feature, demonstrated when he carried Hera disguised as a goddess across a stream (3.66–73). With similar good nature, his comrades had rescued Phineus and the former companions of Heracles. Now, however, Jason and the Argonauts help the young men in expectation of an advantage. This alters what might otherwise have been altruistic kindness to strangers.

Phineus' prophecy is in Jason's mind when he promises to treat the young men well:

> Τὸν δ' αὖτ' Αἴσονος υἱὸς ἐπιφραδέως ἐρέεινε,
> μαντοσύνας Φινῆος ὀισσάμενος τελέεσθαι·
> "Ταῦτα μὲν αὐτίκα πάντα παρέξομεν εὐμενέοντες.
> Ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι κατάλεξον ἐτήτυμον ὁππόθι γαίης
> ναίετε, καὶ χρέος οἷον ὑπεὶρ ἅλα νεῖσθαι ἀνώγει,
> αὐτῶν θ' ὑμείων ὄνομα κλυτὸν ἠδὲ γενέθλην."
>
> (2.1134–39)

> In turn, Aeson's son asked him thoughtfully,
> thinking that the prophecies of Phineus would be fulfilled,
> "We will provide all this at once, since we are well disposed.

---

[37] Eichgrün, "Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 84; C. Collard, "Medea and Dido," *Prometheus*, 1 (1975), 138.

But come, tell me truly, where on the earth
do you dwell, and what necessity commands you to go over the sea,
and what is your glorious name and lineage?"

Mention of Phineus' prophecy at such a moment undercuts an instance of unthinking good nature. Jason's use of the ornamental epithet, "your glorious name" (2.1139), gives his speech a note of Homeric candor, which is in sharp contrast to his actual hope of gain. He violates a rule of Homeric behavior by questioning his guests before he has fed them or given them dry clothes. In the *Odyssey*, only the Cyclops had asked for names at once on first meeting.[38] Apollonius creates a resemblance between the scenes. Argus' appeal for help, with its strongly worded reminder of the protection of Zeus, patron of strangers and suppliants, evokes Odysseus' first speech to the Cyclops (*Od.* 9.269–71; *Arg.* 2.1131–33). Jason's pleasantness mixes good-nature with hypocrisy. On Lemnos a Homeric surface lies over an erotic substructure; here a social surface is exposed as false by a Homeric substructure.

Naturally, the Argonauts are glad to learn the strangers' identity (2.1157). Jason expresses his delight in an unexpected family reunion, and gives his genealogy. The last line of his speech implies that the sons of Phrixus may prove useful as leverage to win the Fleece, whether as hostages or as men under an obligation:[39]

"Ὑπ' ἐννεσίῃσι δ' οἴω
ἀθανάτων ἐς χεῖρας ἐμὰς χατέοντας ἱκέσθαι."
(2.1166–67)

"But I think that by the plans
of the gods you have come needy into my hands."

After he has fed his guests, he uses their rescue to show Zeus's concern for good men (2.1179–84). The pious claims for his mission contrast

---

[38] Fränkel, *Noten*, 291; for Polyphemus' ominous discourtesy, see Bernard Fenik, *Studies in the Odyssey*, Hermes Einzelschriften, 30 (1974), 20–21. Francis Vian points out that the Homeric rule of hospitality is followed only by Aeetes, who is polite to his grandchildren's friends, and by Circe, who uses her guests for scientific experiments (in his review of Levin's *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*, *Gnomon*, 46 [1974], 350). Nevertheless, one might expect the heroes to show a higher standard of civilized hospitality than the non-Greeks whom they encounter, and certainly when they meet people in great distress.

[39] Eichgrün objects to Apollonius' silence about how Jason convinced the young men ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 89), but the sons of Phrixus are hardly in a position to refuse to help Jason (Vian, *Argonautiques I*, 171–72; Fränkel, *Noten*, 308–17). There is no evidence that they are prompted by loyalty to their grandfather or by any other motive but self-preservation. Feeney suggests that Jason will atone for the crime, but not in the way he thinks: through his marriage to Medea (*The Gods in Epic*, 62).

with the insincerity of his offer to take the sons of Phrixus where they want to go (2.1184–86). He will, of course, not take them anywhere until the Argonauts have picked up the Fleece. They need the Fleece, he says, to atone for the attempted sacrifice of Phrixus and to sanctify the clan to which he and the sons of Phrixus belong (2.1192–95, cf. 3.336–39). Pindar put this motive in the mouth of the untrustworthy Pelias (*Pyth.* 4.159–62), and perhaps Jason is innocently reporting what he has heard from his uncle.[40] Nevertheless, he may be using the excuse of atonement because he is talking to the sons of Phrixus. He offers them a way to justify treachery to their mother's father. He calls it piety to their father's kin. He brings in Zeus himself as favoring the scheme to betray their grandfather. In Pindar, this story was untrue, a tale told King Pelias to Jason. Here, Jason is either deceived or deceitful.

Jason has a reason to lie. He wants to win the sons of Phrixus to his side. A Greek hero might lie to the sons of a barbarian princess, even if their father was his kinsman. Jason has changed during the course of Book 2. He helped Phineus because he was the kind of man who would help old ladies across raging rivers. Now he helps the young men for his own self-interest. On entering the world beyond the Rocks, Jason becomes more and more deceitful. His first efforts are relatively harmless. Immediately past the Rocks, he manipulates his comrades. He gets them to shout encouragement by feigning despair, but that may just be good military doctrine. In his story to Lycus, he may have placed some of the adventures in a more favorable light. Again, this is harmless since it is natural to put the best appearance on one's actions. The meeting with the sons of Phrixus foreshadows Jason's future betrayals both in the *Argonautica* and in Euripides' play.

The young men are equally willing to subordinate honor to immediate advantage. Their concerns are practical—Aeetes has a huge snake guarding his Fleece. Still, they throw in their lot with the Argonauts, lured by the glamor of Greece. They realize their grandfather will make life unpleasant when they return.[41] The sons of Phrixus make the Argonauts less acceptable to Aeetes, who would rather hear his grandsons had drowned than see them before him again. When they

[40] So, Eichgrün, "Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 87–89; Collins, "Studies, 18–21.

[41] Their mother shows her barbarian ignorance by mistaking Orchomenus, the city of their destination, for a person (3.265–67). (Hunter, *Argonautica: Book III*, *ad loc.*, has a note on the esoteric scholarly speculation implied in her question.) Her sons, too, are rather contemptuous of the barbarian world they are trying to leave behind. When they introduce their new friends to Aeetes, Argus praises the Greeks' ship as far superior to anything the Colchians could build (3.340–43).

return with the Argonauts, his suspicions are inflamed. Jason's courteous request that he be given the Fleece convinces Aeetes that his grandsons are conspiring with the Argonauts to arrange a palace coup. This explains his outburst to Jason:

> "Αὐτίχ' ὁμαρτήσαντες ἀφ' Ἑλλάδος οὐδ' ἐπὶ κῶας,
> σκῆπτρα δὲ καὶ τιμὴν βασιληίδα, δεῦρο νέεσθε."
>
> (3.375–76)
>
> "To begin with, banding together, you did not come here from Greece for the Fleece, but for my scepter and royal honor."

In rage, he harshly interrupts Jason's speech of introduction:

> "Ξεῖνε, τί κεν τὰ ἕκαστα διηνεκέως ἀγορεύοις;"
>
> (3.401)
>
> "Stranger, why should you relate each thing all the way through (*diênekeôs*)?"

Aeetes thinks he can see through Jason, that Jason's heroic appearance conceals a devious intent. Significantly, the word "continuously" has now changed its connotative meaning. No longer does it allude to the naïve style, or Homeric simplicity. Before the Symplegades, it was used in that particular sense by the narrator and by Phineus. After the Symplegades, it comes to mean pseudo-Homeric, that is, offering a pretext of Homeric sincerity.

His ability to look Homeric will prove very useful when he needs to seduce Medea. She falls in love with the Homeric hero that Jason appears and pretends to be. Jason manipulates the epic forms without partaking of Homeric morality. The meeting on the Island of Ares, ordained by Phineus, fixes Jason's fate. In a ghastly landscape, filled with unnatural peoples and pierced daily by the regular screams of Prometheus, Jason chooses the downward path. His helpful kindness becomes a narrow self-interest that Medea will recognize too late. Homeric allusions in the *Argonautica* offer a standard to measure the compromises real people make. When they are no longer guided by Homeric honor, if nothing else, they become much more interesting.

CHAPTER SEVEN

MEDEA BEWITCHED

By the close of the second book, the literary battle has reached a desperate stage. Ruthlessly exploiting epic's flaws as defined by Callimachus, the narrator has engineered its collapse. The fall threatens to take the entire poem with it, condemning it to oblivion. To survive, the poet must prove that his poetry is more than destructive criticism. Heracles has left a void Jason defines, but does not fill. With the poem half over, a serious character is finally introduced.[1] Medea is the tragic hero of the poem and the only one to struggle with a moral choice. She steps into the space left by Heracles, and, though a girl, becomes the central character.

The poet focuses on Book 3 by the symmetrical arrangement of motivated and non-motivated narrative. The narrative becomes more tightly connected while the reader's attention is channeled into Medea's soul and her anguished debate. The war of contending aesthetics puts Medea's fateful decision in a literary framework. Medea's heart, when opened to the reader, reflects the larger conflict of the book. She struggles between *aidôs*, "respect for the opinion of others," which the poem defines as a Homeric force, and *erôs* "passion," which is defined as Callimachean. Medea's choice of *erôs* over *aidôs* indicates a victory for the Callimachean side.

As background to Medea's struggle, Apollonius draws on the age old oppositions between love and war, women and men, seduction and force. Western tradition has held men and warfare to be more important than women and love affairs, both in life and in literature. The Callimachean narrator, mocks heroes and heroic deeds. Homer treats romantic love as comic. Aphrodite makes the gods laugh when she is caught in bed with Ares (*Od.* 8.343) or wounded by Diomedes' spear (*Il.* 5.421–25). Hera's seduction of her husband (*Il.* 14.153–351) offers comic relief from the warfare that rages for seven full books on the

---

[1] For the third book of the *Argonautica*, see Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius and the Homeric Epic," 122, 130–31; Händel, *Beobachtungen*, 99–100, 103; Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung*, Vol. 2, 214, 248; Beye, "Jason as Love-hero," 31–55; Malcolm Campbell, *Studies in the Third Book of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica* (New York, 1983).

day Patroclus is killed. Dressed in her finest clothes, with a magical girdle from Aphrodite, she advances on Zeus in parody of a heroic onslaught.[2] Love and its deeds are a humorous reflection of glory and the deeds through which glory is won.

The antithesis between romance and warfare turns serious in the duel between Hector and Achilles. Awaiting Achilles' fatal attack, Hector averts the horror by conjuring up the image of a young couple courting:

> "οὐ μέν πως νῦν ἔστιν ...
> τῷ ὀαριζέμεναι, ἅ τε παρθένος ἠΐθεός τε,
> παρθένος ἠΐθεός τ' ὀαρίζετον ἀλλήλοιιν."
>
> (*Il.* 22.126–28)

> "For it is in no way possible ...
> to chat with him as a maiden and a youth,
> as a maiden and a youth chat with each other."

The love talk wistfully imagined by Hector will prove in the *Argonautica* more terrifying even than meeting Achilles.

Flickering against Medea's brooding passion, the bright swords of the Argonauts seem fragile and unimportant. Their battles hitherto have been absurd—as when they arm themselves, with glancing helms and nodding plumes, to shoo away the birds of Ares, or when they slay their former hosts by accident.[3] As a final blow to heroic values, the narrator subordinates his heroes to a woman. The Greek tradition firmly maintains man's superiority to woman. Aristotle claims on numerous occasions that rule by women was "unnatural."[4] Masterful women are found in tragedy as signs of the world's decay; in comedy as an amusing paradox.[5]

The first book of the *Argonautica* treats female power humorously. The Lemnian women and the water nymph are amusing in their direct approach to love. In the second book, they become more menacing. The virginal Artemis and Sinope keep away from men (2.936–54); the Amazons thirst for men's blood (2.962–1000); and men act out women's roles (2.1011–14). On the divine level, goddesses dominate. In the *Iliad*, the "plan of Zeus" motivated the action, bringing about the deaths of many Greeks and Trojans (Διὸς βουλή, *Il.* 1.5). In the *Argonautica*, the

---

[2] Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*, 241.

[3] Fränkel, *Noten*, 268–70; Beye, "Jason as Love-hero," 42–43.

[4] *Pol.* 1254b, 1259b, *Eud. Eth.* 1238b; for further discussion, see Anne Geddes, "The Philosophical Notion of Women in Antiquity," *Antichthon*, 9 (1975), 35–40.

[5] For reversal of roles in tragedy, see Froma I. Zeitlin, "The Dynamics of Misogyny in the *Oresteia*," *Arethusa*, 11 (1978), 149–84; for examples in comedy, see the examples cited by R. G. Ussher, *Aristophanes: Ecclesiazusae* (Oxford, 1973), xv.

"plan of Zeus" is invoked only to remove Heracles from the debilitating atmosphere of the poem (1.1315, 2.154). Athena pushes the Argo through one set of rocks, and the Nereids will push it through another. Hera's will governs the *Argonautica*. She brings Medea to Greece to punish Pelias for his insult to her.[6] With a committee of goddesses she ensures Jason's success in winning Medea. It is therefore appropriate, if shocking, that the central character of the poem is female.

The *Argonautica* is already half over before Medea is even mentioned by name. Up to now, Heracles—whether present or absent—has dominated the poem and overshadowed the colorless Jason. In the second book his loss is mourned by a nameless Argonaut and King Lycus. In the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Achilles and Odysseus, even when absent, hold center stage as far as the other characters are concerned.[7] Neither of those poems loses intensity when Achilles or Odysseus is gone; their absence and return give each poem a focus. The delayed entrance of the central character gives the *Argonautica* a perverse similarity to the Homeric poems, but instead of the departed hero returning, an entirely new character enters—one who has not yet been mentioned. In desperate need for a character to be taken seriously, the reader is committed to Medea; if the reader is Greek and male, his commitment to a female protagonist is revolutionary.

Medea's first role in the book is that of spectator. She is the reader in the text, and her growing involvement with the story reflects the reader's growing involvement with her.[8] She is the first to see the Argonauts' envoys arrive with her nephews, the sons of Phrixus and Chalciope (3.248–53). Medea's cry of surprise arouses Chalciope, whose clamorous joy brings everyone out to the courtyard. During the confusion, Eros shoots Medea with love's arrow. She fades back, a spectator at the ensuing scene, which the privileged reader views quite differently. The narrative in Book 3 separates into different strata as characters mislead and misread one other.

As Argus introduces Jason to King Aeetes, the scene moves from heroic to bourgeois. Like many young men in the real world, Argus

---

[6] Vian, *Argonautiques I*, xviii. For this reason, as Vian (ibid., 43) and Beye ("Jason as Love-hero," 47) suggest, Heracles does not fit into the poem. For Hera's control, see Feeney, *The Gods in Epic*, 58–59, 62–63; Campbell, *Studies in the Third Book*, 53–55.

[7] Despite the absence of the μῆνις theme in Books 1–7 of the *Iliad*, Nagy points out, whenever ἄριστος is used in these books for another warrior, the context always alludes to Achilles either directly or through foreshadowing (*The Best of the Achaeans*, 26–35). Carspecken claims that the *Argonautica* lacks unity because there is no strong central hero ("Apollonius Rhodius," 138–39).

[8] As Fusillo remarks, the perspective changes from that of the narrator to that of the deluded spectator (*Il Tempo delle Argonautiche*, 349–53).

must convince the man in authority to welcome his friends into the house. Like the narrator, who compared Jason to Apollo, Argus glosses over a nonentity. He spins a tale of an evil king trying to rid himself of Jason, who is the best of the Greeks (3.334–35). Nevertheless, Argus cannot conceal the purpose of Jason's visit—to take the Fleece. Dour, blunt, and polite to the extent of not murdering dinner guests, Aeetes does not think highly of his grandsons. Nor does he like their friends. He loathes their impious stories of the gods and suspects they have designs upon his throne. In his incorrect reading of Jason's character, Aeetes is no less deluded than his daughter.

Watched by his daughter, Aeetes bursts into rage at the bizarre request to give Jason the Fleece (3.299–447). Aeetes is too Hellenized to murder guests at his table, but he has other plans. Jason must yoke the fire-breathing bulls, sow the field with dragon's teeth, and kill the crop of warriors that will spring up from the seed. Aeetes' harshness is due to a mistaken impression that Jason has come to organize a palace coup.[9] The reader, aware that Aeetes' fears of Jason are as ill-founded as Medea's love, can savor the misunderstandings.

As a newcomer to the story, Medea has no knowledge of Jason to offset what Argus says about him. While the reader can laugh at Jason's attempt to reassure Aeetes, Medea is entranced by his voice. Her love parallels Nausicaa's for Odysseus, but Nausicaa falls in love with a real hero, Medea with an image of one. She sees only Jason's external features, his looks, his walk, his clothes, the sweetness of his voice (3.453–58). Then she thinks of her own predicament, the struggle between duty and love, between *aidôs*, "honor shame, respect for others," and *erôs* "passion."

Of all the virtues displayed in epic poetry, *aidôs* is the most Homeric, defining the proper limitations on human behavior.[10] *Aidôs* keeps the hero in the front line of battle and prevents him from deserting.[11]

---

[9] Medea's mention of her nephews' reaching Greece (3.773–76) puzzled Fränkel because it implies that Medea, like her father, does not believe their story about the shipwreck (3.369–70, 375–76), and consequently thinks that they have brought the Argonauts to overthrow Aeetes (*Noten*, 383–87). His concern adds to our understanding of her infatuation, which makes her inattentive. She receives only the impression that the Argonauts met her nephews in Greece without considering the implications.

[10] For αἰδώς among men and women, see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 2d ed. (Berkeley, 1951), 17–18, Arthur W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford, 1960), 36–37; and the lengthy treatment of Douglas L. Cairns, who calls it the cement of Homeric society, *Aidos: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1993), 87. A scholiast remarks that *aidos* is a Greek virtue, contrasted with the fear that keeps barbarians in line (at *Il.* 13.95a, alluding to Hector's threat at *Il.* 12.250).

[11] Cairns, *Aidos*, 68–87.

Hector returns to battle because he fears the censure of the Trojan women if he should avoid it (*Il.* 6.441–46). For a woman, *aidôs* means sexual modesty. Whether under the power of a father or given by him to a husband, a woman has to keep her reputation pure. In the *Odyssey*, *aidôs* prevents Nausicaa from walking with Odysseus to town (*Od.* 6.273–88). Like Hector, she fears the censure of her fellow townspeople. In conventional epic, a woman's *aidôs* would be a quiet virtue, subordinate to a man's, and never the focus of serious poetry.[12] In the *Argonautica*, Medea's struggle is made heroic because few of the male characters are ever moved by *aidôs*. The victory of passion is a victory for Callimachus.

Three soliloquies reveal Medea's soul to the reader.[13] She struggles against her passion and self-knowledge. At first she sees Jason's situation from the outside, as a sympathetic spectator. She only wishes Jason knew that she pitied his plight (3.464–70).

Disturbing dreams teach her what she truly desires:

Ἄφαρ δέ μιν ἠπεροπῆες,
οἷά τ' ἀκηχεμένην, ὀλοοὶ ἐρέθεσκον ὄνειροι.
Τὸν ξεῖνον δ' ἐδόκησεν ὑφεστάμεναι τὸν ἄεθλον,
οὔ τι μάλ' ὁρμαίνοντα δέρος κριοῖο κομίσσαι,
οὐδέ τι τοῖο ἕκητι μετὰ πτόλιν Αἰήταο
ἐλθέμεν, ὄφρα δέ μιν σφέτερον δόμον εἰσαγάγοιτο
κουριδίην παράκοιτιν. Ὀίετο δ' ἀμφὶ βόεσσιν
αὐτὴ ἀεθλεύουσα μάλ' εὐμαρέως πονέεσθαι·
σφωιτέρους δὲ τοκῆας ὑποσχεσίης ἀθερίζειν,
οὕνεκεν οὐ κούρῃ ζεῦξαι βόας, ἀλλά οἱ αὐτῷ
προύθεσαν· ἐκ δ' ἄρα τοῦ νεῖκος πέλεν ἀμφήριστον
πατρί τε καὶ ξείνοις· αὐτῇ δ' ἐπιέτρεπον ἄμφω
τὼς ἔμεν, ὥς κεν ἑῇσι μετὰ φρεσὶν ἰθύσειεν·
ἡ δ' ἄφνω τὸν ξεῖνον, ἀφειδήσασα τοκήων,
εἵλετο· τοὺς δ' ἀμέγαρτον ἄχος λάβεν, ἐκ δ' ἐβόησαν
χωόμενοι. Τὴν δ' ὕπνος ἅμα κλαγγῇ μεθέηκε.
(3.617–32)

Thereupon, destructive dreams teased her,
as often happens when one is upset.
She imagined that the stranger undertook the labor,
not really setting forth to take the fleece of the ram,
and that he did not come to the city of Aeetes for that purpose,
but so that he might lead her to his home
as his wedded wife. She thought that she herself struggling

---

[12] Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility*, 37; Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation and the Epic Tradition*, 56–57; Cairns, *Aidos*, 120–25, 185–88, 305–40. In Euripides' *Hippolytus*, Phaedra's loss of honor, while tragic, was subordinated to the fate of the young man who refused her.

[13] Scholes and Kellogg give Apollonius credit for inventing the internal monologue (*The Nature of Narrative*, 181–84).

over the bulls easily did the deed;
but her parents made nothing of her undertaking
because they assigned the yoking of the bulls not to their daughter,
but to the man himself; from this then there arose a struggle hard to judge
between her father and the strangers; both sides
allowed her to decide the matter as her heart desired;
she immediately chose the stranger, not caring for her parents;
enormous grief took them and they shouted out
in their anger. Sleep let her go with their shout.

Medea dreams she is the object of Jason's quest and able to bestow upon him the prize he seeks, namely herself. In doing the labor, she ominously takes on the male role.[14] When she wakes up, she speaks a second soliloquy. She decides to remain a virgin in the house of her parents and let the stranger marry a girl from his own land (3.636–40). For her, as for Nausicaa, the conflict between liking a stranger and respecting one's parents is a matter of *aidôs*. She will involve herself in his affairs only to the extent of testing her sister.

In a third soliloquy, after she has spoken with Chalciope and committed herself to action, she ponders suicide. Euripides' Medea was heroic; Apollonius' Medea is fashioned from the same mold.[15] Her regret at not dying before she lost her heart to Jason (3.774–76) brings out a similarity to Hector, who hoped to die before seeing his city in ruins and his wife a slave (*Il.* 6.464–65). Hector's flight shows the power of Achilles (*Il.* 22.136–66); Medea's love obliterates the restraints of *aidôs*. During her struggle, we see, as nowhere else in the poem, the heroic temperament. Like Heracles, Medea is formed on the heroic model, but the man in a lion's skin is comical compared to the girl in love. *Aidôs* means respect for the opinion of others. Medea has been corrupted by passion so that she uses *aidôs* to avoid the honorable solution:

"'Αλλὰ καὶ ὣς φθιμένῃ μοι ἐπιλλίξουσιν ὀπίσσω
κερτομίας· τηλοῦ δὲ πόλις περὶ πᾶσα βοήσει
πότμον ἐμόν· καί κέν με διὰ στόματος φορέουσαι
Κολχίδες ἄλλυδις ἄλλαι ἀεικέα μωμήσονται·
'ἥ τις κηδομένη τόσον ἀνέρος ἀλλοδαποῖο
κάτθανεν, ἥ τις δῶμα καὶ οὓς ᾔσχυνε τοκῆας,
μαργοσύνῃ εἴξασα.' Τί δ' οὐκ ἐμὸν ἔσσεται αἶσχος;"
(3.791–97)

"But even when I'm dead they will mock me later

[14] Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition*, 54.

[15] Bernard Knox, "The *Medea* of Euripides," *YCS*, 25 (1977), 201–11; and Elizabeth Bryson Bongie, "Heroic Elements in the *Medea* of Euripides," *TAPA*, 107 (1977), 27–56; McDermott, *Euripides' Medea*, 54–55.

with abuse, and far off the whole city will shout abroad
my fate; carrying me on their lips
the women of Colchis at various places will blame my unseemly fate:
'She died because she cared so much for a foreign man
and she shamed her house and her parents
by yielding to lust.' What will not be my shame?"

Nausicaa and Hector obey the dictates of *aidôs* because they fear the disapproval of others.[16] Medea obeys a false sense of *aidôs* when she decides not to commit suicide. Yet, although passion has eroded her values, her wish to act honorably makes her the most serious character in the poem. At the same time, her dilemma has literary meaning. The polarity between *aidôs* and passion reflects the one between Homeric and Callimachean values.

As Medea comes to know her mind and heart, the Argonauts face a moral decision similar to hers. Perceiving Jason's reluctance, several heroes offer to confront Aeetes' fire-breathing bulls (3.504–20), but Argus brings up the possibility of seeking Medea's help. While the heroes consider their alternatives, they receive an omen:

τοῖσι δὲ σῆμα θεοὶ δόσαν εὐμενέοντες.
Τρήρων μὲν φεύγουσα βίην κίρκοιο πελειὰς
ὑψόθεν Αἰσονίδεω πεφοβημένη ἔμπεσε κόλποις·
κίρκος δ' ἀφλάστῳ περικάππεσεν.
(3.540–43)

To them the well-meaning gods sent a sign:
a timid dove fleeing the force of a hawk
from on high fell terrified into Jason's lap;
but the hawk impaled itself on the stern-piece.

Two birds tumbling from the sky indicate the narrator does not take the heroes' debate seriously. Mopsus, the seer, is quick to see the meaning: the dove of Aphrodite is more effective than the hawk of war.[17] He reminds his comrades of the prophecy of Phineus, now corroborated by birds. Mention of Phineus reminds the reader seduction emanates from the will of the Callimachean narrator. The story-teller has the privilege of manipulating action through divine intervention, but usually handles these occasions with decorum.

Even though Heracles is gone, his values are still upheld by Idas.[18] In

---

[16] The importance of public opinion in the Homeric character's sense of self-worth has been examined by Cairns (*Aidos*, 51–68) and Dodds, who cites *Il.* 6.442, 15.561–64, 17.91–93, 22.105; *Od.* 16.75, 21.323–28; Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 1.5.4–5 (*The Greeks and the Irrational*, 18).

[17] Lawall, "Jason as Anti-Hero," 136, n. 24.

[18] Hermann Fränkel, "Ein Don Quijote unter den Argonauten des Apollonios," *MH*, 17 (1960), 1–20.

what is almost an attack on the narrator, he protests a voyage that includes women, avoids *aethloi*, "labors," and listens to birds:

"Ὢ πόποι, ἦ ῥα γυναιξὶν ὁμόστολοι ἐνθάδ' ἔβημεν,
οἳ Κύπριν καλέουσιν ἐπίρροθον ἄμμι πέλεσθαι,
οὐκέτ' Ἐνυαλίοιο μέγα σθένος· ἐς δὲ πελείας
καὶ κίρκους λεύσσοντες ἐρητύεσθε ἀέθλων.
Ἔρρετε, μηδ' ὔμμιν πολεμήια ἔργα μέλοιτο,
παρθενικὰς δὲ λιτῇσιν ἀνάλκιδας ἠπεροπεύειν."

(3.558–63)

"O no! Surely, we came here as companions of women,
since we call on Aphrodite to be our helper
and no longer on the great strength of Ares. Looking to doves
and hawks you keep away from labors.
To hell with you. May warlike deeds be no longer a care to you,
but to seduce timid maidens with prayers."

Bringing in the term for Heracles' labors, *aethloi* (1.1318), Idas sets up the heroic ideal. In Book 1, he mocks Jason's silence. Now he himself is silenced. After his protest, the word *aethlos*, so often applied to Jason's task (3.407, 502, 522, 720, 989, 1050, etc.), takes on an ironic twist. Though Jason's labor lacks substance, Idas' protest has no force against the prophecy of Phineus and the gods who uphold it. Because Phineus is associated with the Callimachean side and Idas with the Heraclean or Homeric side, the Argonauts' choice of seduction over force represents a Callimachean victory. As with Medea, a moral choice is also literary.

Our involvement with Medea becomes more intense as we see more deeply into her character. She was criticized as inconsistent: a love-struck maiden who gathered herbs under corpse-laden trees.[19] More recently, her portrait has been praised for its complexity. Just as Jason looks the hero, so Medea looks the sweet, innocent girl. Outwardly, she is a loyal daughter, a tender sister, and a naïve sweetheart; inwardly, she is self-protective to the point of ruthless treachery. The monolithic, Homeric character shatters, and from the shell emerges a new heroine, more realistic and far more powerful.

In her second soliloquy, Medea reveals a sinister side when she decides to test her sister:

"Ἔμπα γε μήν, θεμένη κύνεον κέαρ, οὐκέτ' ἄνευθεν
αὐτοκασιγνήτης πειρήσομαι, εἴ κέ μ' ἀέθλῳ
χραισμεῖν ἀντιάσῃσιν, ἐπὶ σφετέροις ἀχέουσα
παισί· τό κέν μοι λυγρὸν ἐνὶ κραδίῃ σβέσοι ἄλγος."

(3.641–44)

---

[19] Eichgrün, "Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 93–94; Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 33–34, 158; Hunter, *Argonautica: Book III*, 26–30.

> "Nevertheless, taking on a dog's heart, no longer aloof,
> I shall test my sister if by chance she will beg me
> to help in the contest, worried about her
> sons. This would quench the bitter pain in my heart."

Medea's purpose is ambiguous, even, to herself. The verb πειρᾶσθαι means "to test" earlier in the poem: Jason "tests" the morale of his comrades (2.638), Hera "tests" the morality of the human race (3.68); Amycus and Aeetes "test" the courage of the Argonauts (2.6, 3.399, 405, 407). Having virtuously decided to remain with her parents, Medea does not consciously change her plan when she decides to "test" her sister. Wishing to save Jason herself, she can fully understand Chalciope's anxiety about her sons, but empathy brings no tenderness for her sister's plight. Instead, she plans—or so she pretends to herself—to test Chalciope and reveal her sister's treacherous designs. At the same time, however, she knows she wants to help the stranger. Too honest with herself to be tricked by rationalization, she calls herself a dog for conceiving the idea and is held back by *aidôs* (3.649, 652).

When the two sisters meet, their conversation seems to show the loving support women can give one another. The Homeric subtext, however, gives an opposite impression: under the guise of loving affection, two manipulative women try to get the better of each other. Chalciope rushes to Medea's room after being informed Medea is in tears (3.664–67). Having met with her son Argus, who was sent by the Argonauts to get her help (3.568–71), Chalciope is now vulnerable. If Medea betrays her to their father, she will surely die the death of a treacherous daughter.

On the surface, Chalciope's words to Medea seem full of sisterly concern:

> "῏Ω μοι ἐγώ, Μήδεια, τί δὴ τάδε δάκρυα λείβεις;
> Τίπτ' ἔπαθες; τί τοι αἰνὸν ὑπὸ φρένας ἵκετο πένθος;
> Ἤ νύ σε θευμορίη περιδέδρομεν ἅψεα νοῦσος,
> ἦέ τιν' οὐλομένην ἐδάης ἐκ πατρὸς ἐνιπὴν
> ἀμφί τ' ἐμοὶ καὶ παισίν;"
>
> (3.674–78)

> "O dear me, Medea, why do you pour down tears?
> What has happened to you? What terrible suffering came into your breast?
> Has some god-sent disease attacked your frame?
> Or have you heard of some murderous command from father
> about me and my sons?"

Chalciope looks like the sympathetic women who urged Phaedra to speak in Euripides' *Hippolytus* (121–60, 316–52). Unlike Phaedra's friends, however, who were genuinely puzzled and concerned, Chalciope knows exactly what is wrong with Medea. Her son, present at the bird-omen, at Mopsus' interpretation, and at Idas' protest, will have

told her about the god-ordained seduction of Medea. A Homeric echo supports this. Chalciope echoes the sarcastic questions Achilles asks Patroclus when he finds him in tears (*Il.* 16.7–19).[20] Achilles knows his friend is mourning the Greek defeat, and his irony was recognized in antiquity (schol. at *Il.* 16.12–13). Chalciope's echo of Achilles' speech shows the careful reader that she discerns what Medea's *aidôs* prevents her from saying (3.681–82). Under feigned concern for Medea's mysterious distress, she plans to use Medea's love to further her own treachery.

Remembering she has a legitimate purpose in speaking to Chalciope, Medea regains her composure. To trick her sister into speaking openly, she pretends to have seen dangerous visions about Chalciope's sons: "I had terrible dreams" (3.691). She lies—her dream was a pleasing fantasy about Jason—and her lie is not a maidenly evasion. Her speech is called a *dolos*, a "deadly trick" (3.686–87)—a word that will be used later for Medea's treacherous murder of her brother (4.404, 421, 438, 456). Use of this word informs the reader that more than modesty is at stake, that Medea intends serious harm. Medea speaks "testing" her sister (πειρωμένη, 3.693).

Chalciope does not trust Medea enough to confide in her without binding her by oath, or at least trying to. She does not succeed, because Medea, calling her *daimoniê*, "strange," for her suspicions (3.711), evades the oath. *Daimonios* is used by a speaker who wishes to emphasize the reliability of an assertion to someone who has reason to doubt it.[21] Instead of promising silence, Medea says ambiguously that as much strength as she has, Chalciope will not be lacking (3.714–17). Therefore, if Medea uses her strength to publish Chalciope's treachery, she will not be an oath-breaker. Cruelty to her sister is part—and not an unpleasant part—of *aidôs*.

After Medea has manipulated her sister into making a treacherous request and has refused to swear the oath of secrecy, Chalciope diffidently puts forth her request. Jason has asked Argus to ask Chalciope to ask Medea to help him (3.719–23). Rapturous with joy that the stranger is thinking of her, Medea pledges her everlasting love to her sister and her sister's sons. Her hypocrisy is now amplified by allusion to a moving speech, when Andromache tries to keep Hector from risking his life by declaring her dependence on him:

---

[20] Campbell notes the echo of Achilles' speech (*Studies in the Third Book*, 46).

[21] E. Brunius Nilsson, "Δαιμονίη: An Inquiry into a Mode of Apostrophe in Old Greek Literature," Diss., Uppsala 1955, 73 (known to me from Livrea, *Argonauticon Liber Quartus*, at 4.395). Jason calls Medea δαιμονίη at 3.1120, 4.95, 4.395.

""Εκτορ, ἀτὰρ σύ μοί ἐσσι πατὴρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ
ἠδὲ κασίγνητος, σὺ δέ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτης ... ."
(*Il.* 6.429–30)

"Hector, but you are my father and honored mother;
you are my brother and you are my strong husband ... ."

Achilles slew Andromache's father and brothers; her mother died of grief; Hector is all she has left, and—the audience knows—he too is destined to die at Achilles' hands. Medea finds in Chalciope a medley of intense family relationships:

"... ὡς δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ
φημὶ κασιγνήτη τε σέθεν κούρη τε πέλεσθαι ... ."
(3.732–33)

"... thus I say
that I am your sister and your daughter ... ."

Chalciope *is* Medea's sister and is almost her mother because she breast fed her (3.734–35). At this moment, however, Chalciope and her sons are only a means to an end. Medea desires, as she herself knows, to betray her father; *aidôs* requires her to betray her sister. She reveals a dark side when she speaks of family loyalty at such a time. Thus, the sisters play on each other's fears and desires as their endearments are undercut by their lack of true affection. When it proves convenient, Medea readily betrays Chalciope's secret.

The next day, Medea buys time alone with Jason by revealing her sister's plan to her maids:

""Αργος γάρ μ' ἐπέεσσι παρατρέπει, ὡς δὲ καὶ αὐτὴ
Χαλκιόπη· τὰ δὲ σῖγα νόῳ ἔχετ' εἰσαΐουσαι
ἐξ ἐμέθεν, μὴ πατρὸς ἐς οὔατα μῦθος ἵκηται.
τὸν ξεῖνόν με κέλονται ὅ τις περὶ βουσὶν ὑπέστη,
δῶρ' ἀποδεξαμένην, ὀλοῶν ῥύσασθαι ἀέθλων.
Αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τὸν μῦθον ἐπῄνεον ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτὸν
κέκλομαι εἰς ὠπὴν ἑτάρων ἄπο μοῦνον ἱκέσθαι,
ὄφρα τὰ μὲν δασόμεσθα μετὰ σφίσιν, εἴ κεν ὀπάσσῃ
δῶρα φέρων, τῷ δ' αὖτε κακώτερον ἄλλο πόρωμεν
φάρμακον. 'Αλλ' ἀπονόσφι πέλεσθέ μοι, εὖτ' ἂν ἵκηται."
(3.902–11)

"Argus keeps trying to lead me astray with words, and Chalciope
herself does too—keep silently in your minds what you hear
from me lest any word reach my father's ears.
They urge me to take gifts and to save the stranger,
whoever consented to the bulls, from the deadly contest.
I approved of their words and am bidding him
to come into my sight alone, without his comrades,
so that we may divide among ourselves whatever gifts
he brings to offer us and give him another,
worse drug. But keep away from me when he arrives."

To her maids, who will witness the meeting with Jason, she claims to have the honorable intention of destroying him by magic. This may still be so. Until the last moment she retains the option of destroying Jason. Her lies and treachery to Chalciope keep the issue in doubt, because she does not know the direction tradition has imposed on the story. The reader, who knows she will help Jason, can separate her rationalizations from her true desire. Apollonius' emphasis on the separative process during the first two books of the poem prepares the reader to separate Medea's appearance from her true character and the conflicts in her soul.

The meeting of Jason and Medea is drawn from three scenes in Homer: the meeting of Odysseus and Nausicaa (*Od.* 6), the embassy to Achilles (*Il.* 9), and the duel between Achilles and Hector (*Il.* 22). The interplay among the three scenes keeps the reader going back and forth between the surface and the cruel reality underneath. With the deadly drugs in her "ambrosial" bosom (3.844–68), Medea, looking just like Nausicaa, sets out to meet Jason.[22] Both girls are likened to Artemis in extended similes (*Od.* 6.102–109; *Arg.* 3.876–85); both sing and dance with their maids (*Od.* 6.99–101; *Arg.* 3.949–50). The poet brings out a telling contrast between Medea's sinister nature and Nausicaa's innocence by mentioning the reaction of her fellow citizens. Nausicaa fears the censorious eyes of the Phaeacians if they see her walk with Odysseus; the Colchians are terrified to meet Medea's gaze because she has the evil eye (3.885–86). Medea's maidenly activities are darkened by an inner consciousness of doing wrong. Nausicaa has no idea that a stranger lurks in the bushes; Medea feigns an interest in the game with her maids because she is waiting for the stranger to appear. Externally, Medea resembles one of the sweetest girls in fiction, and, by this appearance, ensnares Jason.

In parody of the embassy in the *Iliad*, Jason and two others set out to meet Medea, a young girl in love having replaced the offended hero (3.913–18). In Book 9 of the *Iliad*, Achilles rejects the appeals of his former comrades to return to battle. The narrator splits the central, decisive scene of the *Iliad* into two. Like Achilles, Medea receives an embassy and says "no" three times, but the narrator has reversed the order. She says "no" in three soliloquies before the embassy appears (3.464–70, 636–44, 772–801), and says "yes" to Jason. Her fateful involvement with the Argonauts has consequences as bitter for her as Achilles' refusal has for him.

---

[22] Campbell points out the perverseness of Medea's being modeled on Nausicaa (*Studies in the Third Book*, 56–60).

The presence of two bystanders at her meeting with Jason would have enabled Medea to preserve her *aidôs* by giving him the magic drugs without the proper instructions. To prevent this, a crow is sent by Hera to make the love story possible. As in the case of Phineus, a Callimachean figure intervenes to direct the course of the story. Callimachus liked the idea of a talking crow: crows speak in two of his surviving poems (*Hec.* frag. 260; *Iamb.* frag. 4.82), and most agree that the resemblance is intentional.[23] To be sure, crows were thought to have prophetic powers, but this crow echoes a significant passage of Callimachus. Its criticism of Mopsus,

> "Ἀκλειὴς ὅδε μάντις, ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα παῖδες ἴσασιν . . . ."
> (3.932)
>
> "This prophet is inglorious, who knows, not even as much as children . . . ."

resembles the criticism of Callimachus' poetry in the *Hymn to Apollo*:

> "Οὐκ ἄγαμαι τὸν ἀοιδὸν ὃς οὐδ' ὅσα πόντος ἀείδει."
> (*H. Ap.* 2.106)
>
> "I do not like the poet who does not sing as much as the sea."

Hode mantis, "this prophet," is in the same metrical position as *ton aoidon*, "the poet." *Akleiês*, "inglorious," corresponds to *ouk agamai*, "I do not like"; *hos oud' hosa*, "who . . . not so much," is common to both and in the same metrical position. A Callimachean poet is criticized in one passage; a prophet, in the other. One critic, Phthonos, holds up the sea, a Callimachean image for epic poetry, as the standard the poet has failed to meet; the other critic, the crow, holds up the child, an image for the Callimachean poet, as the standard for the dull-witted prophet.[24] The literary criticism contained in Callimachus' line is reflected by the direct criticism in Apollonius' adaptation. By giving the crow a speaking role and having it echo Callimachus, the Callimachean narrator salutes his master.

The crow both furthers the course of love and prevents the recur-

[23] Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, Vol. 1, 639. For bibliography, see Herter, *Bericht* 2, 376–77. Händel points out that the crow's intervention changes the story from epic to romance (*Beobachtungen*, 111–12).

[24] Pindar used the verb παίζω, "play," to denote writing poetry (*Ol.* 1.15–16). The Alexandrians adopted the term for their own poetry. According to Callimachus, the Telchines attack him for writing poems that a child would write. Wimmel explains Callimachus' use of the image as denoting the smallness of his kind of poetry (*Kallimachos in Rom*, 112). The epigram attacking Callimachus (*A.P.* 11.275) calls him a παίγνιον. Poetry is called παίγνιον, "toy," in the Alexandrian age (Hedylus in Athenaeus 11.473a; cf. Latin, *ludo*). The boy constructing a cricket cage in Theocritus' ecphrasis (*Id.* 1.52–54) is an image for a poet, according to Charles Segal, "'Since Daphnis Dies': The Meaning of Theocritus' First Idyll," *MH*, 31 (1974), 3.

rence of a notorious Homeric crux. It implicitly addresses a textual problem of the *Iliad* that has troubled both ancient and modern scholars alike. In the *Iliad*, three men visit Achilles in his tent, but the dual forms in the passage indicate that only two men go (9.182, 183, 185, etc.).[25] The narrator of the *Argonautica* weaves the textual problem into his story's action and implies a criticism of epic carelessness in order to direct his embassy to a different conclusion from Homer's. The crow asks reasonably, "What girl will speak her feelings to a man with two bystanders present?" Mopsus, who understands the language of birds, takes its advice. Through Mopsus, the narrator simultaneously criticizes Homer and, by implication, praises Callimachean narrative.

> "Τύνη μὲν νηὸν δὲ θεᾶς ἴθι, τῷ ἔνι κούρην
> δήεις, Αἰσονίδη· μάλα δ' ἠπίῃ ἀντιβολήσεις
> Κύπριδος ἐννεσίῃς, ἥ τοι συνέριθος ἀέθλων
> ἔσσεται, ὡς δὴ καὶ πρὶν 'Αγηνορίδης φάτο Φινεύς.
> Νῶι δ', ἐγὼν Ἄργος τε, δεδεγμένοι, ἔστ' ἂν ἵκηαι,
> τῷδ' αὐτῷ ἐνὶ χώρῳ ἀπεσσόμεθ'· οἰόθι δ' αὐτὸς
> λίσσεό μιν πυκνοῖσι παρατροπέων ἐπέεσσιν."
>
> (3.940–46)

> "You go to the goddess' temple, in which you will meet
> the maiden, Jason. You will find her gentle because of
> the promptings of Cypris, who, as you know, will be the helper of our
> struggles, just as Phineus the son of Agenor said before.
> We two, Argus and I, awaiting your return
> will keep away, in this same place. Alone, by yourself,
> beseech her and urge her with crafty words."

Mopsus divides the three men up in a way that recalls the over-explicitness of the first bird-omen. Having already told Jason to go to the temple of Hecate (3.940), Mopsus finds it necessary to identify "the two of us" (νῶι, 3.944) as himself and Argus. Jason is presumably so dull, or so frightened, that this annotation is necessary. By splitting the three men up, Mopsus can use the dual form properly, as Homer does not.

To emphasize the ideological tenor of the crow's instructions, the narrator has it criticize epic carelessness by echoing a criticism against Callimachean brevity. Like Phineus, the crow alludes to Callimachean poetics while directing the course of the story toward love. Apollonius uses the divine machinery to send two different messages. The characters are instructed on how to act; the readers, on how to interpret. Once again, the Callimachean seal is stamped on a device of plot

---

[25] For a clear presentation of the problem, see Denys L. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley, 1959), 297–315. Aristarchus' attempt to solve the problem indicates the Alexandrians' puzzlement—see Scholiast A on *Il.* 9.169, Erbse, *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem*, Vol. 2, 435.

manipulation. Like the prophet, the crow puts an erotic spin on Callimachean doctrine.

On Lemnos, an erotic substructure was visible under the Homeric surface; in Colchis, the erotic surface is separated from the Homeric substructure of doom and hatred. When Jason comes to meet Medea, the literary background of the scene changes from the embassy in the *Iliad* to the duel between Hector and Achilles. Achilles, striding across the plain to find Hector, is compared to the dog star (*Il.* 22.25–32), which now shines through Jason as he approaches Medea (3.956–61). Both Homer and Apollonius note the destructiveness of the beautiful star that shines in August, a time of disease and infertility—"the dog days."[26] Medea's seduction is darkened by association with Hector's fate, while Achilles, doomed to die after killing Hector, casts a literary shadow on Jason's success. In the *Iliad*, Hector imagines a love scene to divert himself from the duel he would fight with Achilles (22.126–28). In the *Argonautica*, the "love talk" wistfully imagined by Hector replaces the duel, which seems somehow innocent compared to the deceptions and self-deceptions that take place as the two young people corrupt each other.

The narrator gives Jason a poetic voice with which to seduce Medea. Earlier, in his conversation with Aeetes, Jason used this voice, promising to carry tidings of Aeetes' generosity if he gave him the Fleece (3.391–92). Odysseus made a similar promise to Alcinous (*Od.* 17.418), as did the poet of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, who promised to spread the fame of the people of Delos (3.174–76).[27] The king of Colchis, however, has his own idea of publicity: cutting off the arms and tongues of unwelcome guests to warn away others (3.377–80). Jason's poetic appeal finds a much more favorable audience in Medea (3.990–96).

Jason begins deceptively, when he begs Medea not to deceive him with pleasing words—his own strategy (3.982–83).[28] He disarms her by placing himself in the weaker position. Then he proceeds to cajole her by likening their situation to that of Theseus and Ariadne (3.997–1004).[29] The reader knows that Theseus abandoned Ariadne on Naxos, where Dionysus would find her, marry her, and then give her a crown of stars. As Jason implies, by saving Theseus, Ariadne won her celestial reward, but he significantly omits her desertion by Theseus. Later, when Medea asks to hear about Jason's home and more about Ariadne,

---

[26] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 137.

[27] Fränkel likens Odysseus to the professional poet (*Ancient Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, 11–12).

[28] Goldhill, *The Poet's Voice*, 301.

[29] Eichgrün criticizes Jason's duplicity ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 92).

he tells her all about Thessaly and then breaks off with a striking echo of the narrator's voice:

> "'Αλλὰ τίη τάδε τοι μεταμώνια πάντ' ἀγορεύω,
> ἡμετέρους τε δόμους τηλεκλείτην τ' Ἀριάδνην,
> κούρην Μίνωος, τό περ ἀγλαὸν οὔνομα κείνην
> παρθενικὴν καλέεσκον ἐπήρατον, ἥν μ' ἐρεείνεις;"
> (3.1096–99)
>
> "But why do I say all these things in vain,
> about my house and far-famed Ariadne,
> the daughter of Minos, and the glorious name
> they called that lovely maid about whom you ask me."

The narrator and Phineus interrupt themselves for the sake of art (1.648–49, 2.390–91). Each avoids "continuous" narrative out of allegiance to Callimachean aesthetics, but Jason stops from a desire to deceive. This is not the moment to bring in the Theseus' desertion. Through Jason's sweet voice, we hear the poet's reminder that art is deception. Yet, for all Jason's deceptiveness, he too is fooled by her apparent innocence. When Medea asks Jason to remember her far away (3.1069–71), the reader hears the allusion to Nausicaa's similar appeal to Odysseus (*Od.* 8.461–62). The echoes of Odysseus' meeting with Nausicaa subtly underscore their impressions of each other: his that Medea is a sweet, compliant girl like Nausicaa; hers that Jason is a real hero.[30]

According to Pindar, love made Jason "clever" (σοφός, *Pyth.* 4.217). Similarly, Callimachus says that love taught Acontius "skill" (τέχνη, *Ait.* frag. 67.1–3). Because "cleverness" is Pindar's (σοφία, *Ol.* 1.116, 9.38, etc.), and "skill" Callimachus' word for poetic artistry (τέχνη, *Ait.* frag. 1.17), the narrator might seem to follow tradition by fusing the role of poet and lover in Jason's interview with Medea. The wisdom and skill, however, reside in the listener, rather than in the speaker. The duty of an honest poet is to deceive; the role of an intelligent audience is to be deceived (above, p. 23). By these criteria, Jason and Medea are perfectly matched. No one is cleverer than Medea. So clever is she, in fact, that, having been tricked into thinking of Jason as a real hero, she actually makes him one, if only for a few hours.

During his contest with the fire-breathing bulls and the earth-born warriors, Jason exhibits the superhuman power of heroes described by Homer.[31] The gods breathed strength into them, whereas he is made powerful by Medea's magic.[32] He is "eager" (μαιμώων, 3.1351); he can

---

30 Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 137.
31 Hunter, *Literary Studies*, 134.
32 See Dodds for the heroic symptoms (*The Greeks and the Irrational*, 8–10).

perform difficult tasks with ease (3.1309); he is even likened to a boar that foams at the mouth (3.1353). The artificiality of the magic potions reminds us that Jason's brilliant surface has temporarily hardened. The narrator demonstrates his ability both to create a Homeric hero in action and to make the portrait unconvincing. Angry at the deception, Idas, the grumbling representative of Homeric ideals, tries to make a dent in Jason's armor. He wrecks his own sword and is never seen again (3.1252–54).[33] Like fairy gold, Jason's powers soon melt away (3.1246–1407). He changes back into the insubstantial character he was earlier.

Allusions to the *Iliad* place Medea at the center of the poem in precisely the place vacated by Heracles. His departure from the *Argonautica* brings together two moments from the *Iliad*: Achilles' withdrawal from battle and his return. These two moments are fused into one because Heracles' departure from one story means his return to another. Halfway between Achilles' departure and return, he receives the embassy of Greeks, who urge him to come back. The narrator reshapes this central, decisive moment and puts Medea in Achilles' place. Heracles' removal pushes the story towards romance; Medea's entrance makes romance terrifying. The Argo does not dip down under her feet when she steps aboard, but the poem's additional psychological freight makes her a counterweight to the departed hero.

Like Jason, Medea belongs to a fixed mythological tradition. Her story is used by the narrator to make a statement about epic poetry. After Heracles' departure, the poem lacks a central character—a problem solved with Medea's arrival. A force is needed to combat the Argonauts' resistance to anti-heroic narrative. To claim her as his own, the narrator puts her emotional development into a literary context. Having placed her in the center of the story—the place formerly held by Heracles—the narrator emphasizes she no longer follows the Homeric road. Heracles' choice was described metaphorically as a choice between two paths: the difficult, uphill path to virtue and the easy, downward road to vice (above, p. 68). The contrasting roads taken by Medea combine literary and ethical meanings.[34] When she first leaves home to meet Jason, she is an epic princess, potentially a Nausicaa, secure in her position, as yet uncommitted to the stranger. She takes the "broad highway" (εὐρεῖαν κατ' ἀμαξιτόν, 3.874). While the simile describing her ride evokes her epic model, the broad highway brings to mind Callimachus' metaphor for epic poetry:

---

[33] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 86.

[34] Above, p. 45. Segal contrasts the open highway of oral poetry with the narrow, difficult path of written language ("Greek Tragedy," 56).

"πρὸς δέ σε] καὶ τόδ' ἄνωγα, τὰ μὴ πατέουσιν ἅμαξαι
τὰ στείβειν, ἑτέρων ἴχνια μὴ καθ' ὁμά
δίφρον ἐλ]ᾶν μηδ' οἶμον ἀνὰ πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους
ἀτρίπτο]υς, εἰ καὶ στε[ι]νοτέρην ἐλάσεις."
(*Ait.* frag. 1.25–28)

"And I bid you also to walk where the wagons
do not trample, and not to drive your chariot
in the same tracks of others nor along the broad road, but along roads
untrodden, even though you will drive along a more narrow way."

The second time she sets out to meet Jason, Medea flees for her life "along the narrow ways" recommended by Apollo (ἀνὰ στεινὰς ... οἴμους, 4.43). By giving up Homeric *aidôs* she follows the path approved by the Callimachean narrator. Jason is Callimachean in his lack of heroic qualities. Medea is Callimachean because, even with the power and the resourcefulness of an epic hero, she is a girl. Forced to adopt solutions not normally available to innocent young girls, Medea creates a new path for herself. By sending her along this new path, one of murder, humiliation, and finally marriage with Jason, Apollonius establishes one aspect of the Callimachean tradition.[35]

[35] Although Medea blames herself for permanently staining the reputation of women (4.367–68), she is the forerunner of the women of Roman elegy whose refusal to be dominated by men by rejecting *pudicitia*, the equivalent of *aidos*. This may explain the controversial line of Propertius, who has learned to hate *castae puellae*, "chaste girls" (1.1.5). The passive women of epic poetry, men's victims and prizes, do not interest him.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE AWAKENING

Book 4 treats the growing power of Medea and the narrator's increasing fear of her. Her rage builds as she is disillusioned about Jason, whom she is forced to marry in a humiliating ceremony. In our last view of her, she focuses this rage on the bronze giant Talos, who crumples under her gaze. The narrator has used her for his own literary purpose of deconstructing epic poetry by placing a young girl at the center of an epic poem. Having put her on the Callimachean path, he proves unable to control her. He wins the war for Callimachus—the last events of the poem symbolize a Callimachean victory—yet, when Medea brings down Talos, a symbol of epic poetry, he is clearly frightened of the demon he has conjured up.

At first Medea's seduction is not treated seriously. It is lightheartedly arranged by Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite who discuss her situation with witty allusions to themes of love epigrams.[1] In the glittering air of Olympus, the goddesses allude to many motifs of love poetry that the poem will present in all seriousness. "May there be nothing worse than Aphrodite," quips the goddess—it was doubtless a proverb—"if I do not help you" (3.79–80). "You unspeakable evil," Aphrodite says to Eros as she caresses him under his chin (3.129). On earth, Medea's thoughts and actions reveal the truth that love is an unspeakable evil. Just before she and Jason kill Absyrtus, the poet calls Eros a "great evil for men" (4.445), and so adds a specific meaning to Aphrodite's affectionate address. "Let there be no *charis*" (i.e., recompense for services), Aphrodite assures Hera (3.82). In its immediate context, "recompense" alludes to Aphrodite's willingness to confer a favor; more distantly, to Jason's ingratitude. Complaining about Eros, Aphrodite tells her visitors that he has no *aidôs*, "respect"—even goddesses have trouble with their children. When Medea struggles in her soul between passion and *aidôs*, the issue is treated more seriously. Consoling Aphrodite for her son's impudence, Hera says, "He [i.e., Eros] will cease" (3.110); on earth Medea's passion for Jason will cease, replaced with hatred and contempt.

---

[1] Beye examines the cynical humor of this scene (*Epic and Romance*, 126–27).

With her love a commodity traded for a golden toy, Medea does not seem a likely subject of serious poetry. Nor does the narrator take her seriously at first, except as a means to sabotage the heroic mission. On the contrary, he regards her with amusement even while he attributes to her the abilities that all witches possess. She is able to make Prometheus scream from miles away (3.865–66), to stop rivers in full spate, and to pull down the moon (3.528–33, 4.57–65). In Book 4, however, the narrator loses control. As Medea grows more powerful, she becomes more enigmatic, harder to read. In the invocation to Book 4, he confesses he does not know why Medea ran—was it to Jason or from Aeetes?

At the beginning of Book 3, he objectifies her seduction and passes over her story in favor of Jason's:

> Εἰ δ' ἄγε νῦν, Ἐρατώ, παρά θ' ἵστασο, καί μοι ἔνισπε,
> ἔνθεν ὅπως ἐς Ἰωλκὸν ἀνήγαγε κῶας Ἰήσων
> Μηδείης ὑπ' ἔρωτι.
>
> (3.1–3)
>
> Come now, Erato, stand by and tell me
> how Jason brought back the Fleece to Iolcus,
> by Medea's love.

The narrator's first mention of Medea subordinates her to Jason. He reduces Medea's love to a dative of means and Medea herself to a subjective genitive.

At the opening of Book 4, however, the narrator admits that he no longer understands her:[2]

> Αὐτὴ νῦν κάματόν γε, θεά, καὶ δήνεα κούρης
> Κολχίδος ἔννεπε Μοῦσα, Διὸς τέκος· ἦ γὰρ ἔμοιγε
> ἀμφασίῃ νόος ἔνδον ἑλίσσεται, ὁρμαίνοντι
> ἠέ μιν ἄτης πῆμα δυσίμερον ἦ τόγ' ἐνίσπω
> φύζαν ἀεικελίην ᾗ κάλλιπεν ἔθνεα Κόλχων.
>
> (4.1–5)
>
> You yourself tell me now, goddess, Muse, child of Zeus,
> the pain and the plans of the Colchian maiden. For in me,
> my mind whirls in speechlessness as I wonder
> whether I should call her leaving the tribes of the Colchians
> the pain of luckless infatuation or shameful flight.

From subjective genitive, Medea is promoted to hero. When the narrator asks the goddess to tell of Medea's pain and plans, he echoes the invocations of Homer on the wrath of Achilles and on the cunning

---

[2] Feeney finds in these two invocations a growing dependence of the poet on the Muse (*The Gods in Epic*, 90–91).

endurance of Odysseus. With an emotion he shows on only one other occasion, the narrator claims to be struck dumb.[3] He can no longer explain Medea's state of mind. Is it love or fear? We learn this from Medea herself, in her last soliloquy:

"Αἴθε σε πόντος
ξεῖνε διέρραισεν πρὶν Κολχίδα γαῖαν ἱκέσθαι."
(4.32–33)

"Would that the sea
had smashed you to bits, stranger, before you came to the Colchian land."

Even the gods do not understand her. The Moon, looking down, fondly imagines that Medea is running off, eager to meet her lover (4.57–65). The narrator, who once controlled Medea's mind, can no longer read her thoughts; a goddess looks down and misinterprets what she sees. In this chapter, we will see what Medea, freed from restraint of narrator and gods, can do.

As Medea grows more powerful, Jason shrivels. The power swings from him to Medea as he swears to make her his bride:

"Δαιμονίη, Ζεὺς αὐτὸς Ὀλύμπιος ὅρκιος ἔστω
Ἥρη τε Ζυγίη, Διὸς εὐνέτις, ἦ μὲν ἐμοῖσιν
κουριδίην σε δόμοισιν ἐνιστήσεσθαι ἄκοιτιν,
εὖτ' ἂν ἐς Ἑλλάδα γαῖαν ἱκώμεθα νοστήσαντες."
Ὣς ηὔδα, καὶ χεῖρα παρασχεδὸν ἤραρε χειρί
δεξιτερήν. Ἡ δέ σφιν ἐς ἱερὸν ἄλσος ἀνώγει
νῆα θοὴν ἐλάαν αὐτοσχεδόν, ὄφρ' ἔτι νύκτωρ
κῶας ἑλόντες ἄγοιντο παρὲκ νόον Αἰήταο.
(4.95–102)

"Strange one, let Zeus himself on Olympus be witness
and then Hera, goddess of marriage, wife of Zeus,
that I will place you as my wedded wife in my house,
whenever returning we come to Greece."
Thus he spoke, and he joined to hers
his right hand. But she ordered them to draw the swift boat
to the sacred grove at once so that while it was still night
they might take the Fleece away against Aeetes' will.

Desperate to be rescued, Medea has thrown herself on Jason's mercy. Having lifted her up and promised to marry her, Jason takes her right hand with his (4.99–100). A glance at the Greek text undercuts the surface meaning:

... δεξιτερήν. Ἡ δέ σφιν ἐς ἱερὸν ἄλσος ἀνώγει ....
(4.100)

---

[3] The word describes the heroes, when they are told of the guardian snake (2.409); Aeetes, when he sees Jason perform his labor (3.1372); and Medea, when she first sees Jason and later, when she contemplates suicide (3.284, 811).

...his right hand. But she ordered them into the sacred grove ....

One would expect Medea to show joyous gratitude. Instead, she ignores him for the important business of stealing the Fleece. Jason's hand is left dangling at the beginning of the line. The dramatic shift to the nominative feminine pronoun, "she," shows how quickly Medea has taken control.

At the moment he gets his hands on the Fleece, Jason is further diminished. Because he has won it without danger, his prize is cheapened. His fear that someone will take the Fleece away shows that it is not rightly his (4.181–82).[4] His loss of manhood at the moment of triumph is indicated by a simile that likens him to a young girl rejoicing in a new robe (4.167–71).[5] At the same time, the simile directs the reader to the end of Euripides' *Medea* and the horrible death of Jason's Corinthian bride, who will put on Medea's robe and burn to death.[6] Jason loses his sexual attractiveness by reaping its reward. Later, Medea will say with perfect truth that it was not lust that drove her from home (4.1018–25).

Fleeing with Medea and the Fleece, the Argonauts are trapped on an island by Medea's brother, Absyrtus, and an army of Colchians. In this moment of crisis, Medea comes to see the hypocrisy of the man for whom she gave up everything. Jason negotiates with her brother to give her back (4.338–49). Furious at his betrayal, Medea scornfully reminds him of his appeal to Zeus, protector of suppliants (3.986, 4.358–59). In their first meeting, when she still resembles Nausicaa, she hopes Jason will remember her later on when he is far away (μνώεο, 3.1069). Now she hopes that he remember her, when he is destroyed by her curse (μνήσαιο, 4.383). The curse, that he be driven from home is fulfilled, though not in the way she expects (4.384–88). Jason will bring her home as an Erinys against himself.

Jason is "terrified" (ὑποδδείσας, 4.394), more afraid of Medea than of the Colchian army. He tries to defend himself against her accusations

---

[4] Aristotle wrote that the good is natural to its possessor and not easily taken away (*Nic. Eth.* 1095b).

[5] For the degradation of Jason's metaphorical change to a woman at the moment he gets his hands on the Fleece, compare the scene in the *Bacchae*, where Pentheus in his moment of triumph is dressed as a woman (912–76), see Charles Segal, "The Menace of Dionysus: Sex Roles and Reversals in Euripides' *Bacchae*," *Arethusa*, 11 (1978), 185–202. J. M. Bremer, "Full Moon and Marriage in Apollonius' *Argonautica*," CQ, 37 (1987), 423–26, argues from parallels indicating that the full moon was considered the ideal time for a wedding that Apollonius was creating a joyous mood, with Medea eagerly looking forward to her wedding. Surely, Apollonius drew on the tradition to create an ironic efect.

[6] Virginia Knight, "Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.167–70 and Euripides' Medea," CQ, 41 (1991), 248–50.

by claiming that his agreement with Absyrtus is a trick, *dolos* (4.404–5), that he needs time to devise a scheme to kill Absyrtus, and that open resistance would only lead to the Argonauts' being slaughtered without saving Medea.[7] His answer recalls the "honeyed words," with which he tried to placate the hostile and suspicious Aeetes (μειλίχια ἔπεα, 3.385). Now Medea correctly divines Jason's disloyalty to her, and Jason echoes his reassurance to Aeetes with "honeyed words" to her (μειλίχια ἔπεα, 4.394). *Ischeo*, "control yourself" (4.395), he says to her now, as earlier he said to Aeetes, *scheo moi*, "please control yourself" (3.386). The two speeches are further connected by Jason's fawning demeanor. He speaks "wagging his tail" (ὑποσσαίνων, 3.396, 4.410). The echoes of the previous scene reveal the knowledge the lovers now have of each other. Medea loses her illusions about Jason's heroism or his love, and Jason in turn sees how much Medea resembles her father.

The suspicions of Aeetes were not allayed by Jason's honeyed words, and the parallel with the earlier scene suggests Medea, too, is not convinced. Her suspicions have greater foundation in truth. Although Jason told Aeetes the truth about not desiring his kingdom, he has reason to lie to Medea. Like a reader, Medea studies his words carefully.[8] Having no choice, she plots with Jason the death of her brother. In bitter irony Medea then alludes to the moment of her folly, when, rapturously in love, she had wished to pull from her bosom not only the magic potions but also her heart and soul to lavish on him (3.1013–16). *Phrazeo nun*, "think now," she said, before giving Jason directions for applying the potions (3.1026). *Phrazeo nun*, she repeats, as she instructs him in the murder of Absyrtus (4.411). She refers to the moment of their initial meeting, "when I first went mad" (4.412–13), and the poet shows his mastery of psychological detail by having her repeat what she said in that happier time. The intensity of Medea's bitterness is heightened by the memory of her joyful illusions.

As Hector and Andromache were joined by love and trust, so Jason and Medea are bound by treachery and murder. The difference between the two couples is emphasized in Homeric echoes. In her speech to Jason, Medea once again echoes the words of Andromache, as she did in the scene with Chalciope, and makes them uniquely her own:

"Τῶ φημὶ τεῇ κούρῃ τε δάμαρ τε
αὐτοκασιγνήτῃ τε μεθ' Ἑλλάδα γαῖαν ἕπεσθαι."
(4.368–69)

---

[7] Beye suggests that Jason does not plan to use δόλος against Absyrtus during the negotiations but is merely trying to appease Medea (*Epic and Romance*, 162); cf. Hunter, *Literary Studies*, 15.

[8] R. L. Hunter, "Medea's Flight: The Fourth Book of the *Argonautica*," CQ, 37 (1987), 131.

"Therefore I say that as your daughter and your wife
and your very own sister I follow you to Greece."

Having betrayed her father and about to help murder her brother, she is entitled to receive from Jason the protection she has forfeited by her actions on his behalf. Her wording is significant. Unlike Andromache, for whom Hector played every important family role, Medea asserts the force of her egotism in claiming all the roles for herself.[9] Jason's answer sustains the contrast with the happier couple. He would rather die, he says, than leave Medea unprotected (*Arg.* 4.402–3); Hector wishes to die rather than hear of Andromache's enslavement (*Il.* 6.464–65). The love scene between Hector and Andromache offers a poignant contrast to the one played out here. The young lovers' disillusionment is further amplified by an allusion to Ariadne. Jason and Medea lure Absyrtus to his death by giving him the cloak in which Dionysus first slept with Ariadne. Medea now knows the whole story of the woman Jason has urged her to emulate.[10]

It is the last conversation between the couple that we hear. When they first meet, they stand "silent and wordless" (τὼ δ' ἄνεῳ καὶ ἄναυδοι, 3.967). Later, needing purification for Absyrtus' murder, they sit by Circe's hearth, once again "silent and wordless" (4.693). The repeated lines have meaning.[11] At first, they are like trees: silent, but soon to make a sound in the wind (3.967–71). At last, when they sit together on the ashes of the hearth, all has been said. Their mutual disillusionment is complete. From Medea's aunt, Circe, the couple receives absolution from blood-guilt, but no sympathy (4.693–752). Realizing that Medea has committed fratricide (4.737), Circe sends them away contemptuously. Medea is led away by Jason in tears (4.749–52).

Medea undergoes a symbolic loss of virginity when she hands the Fleece to Jason. The blood Absyrtus throws on her gown when he lies dying is a visual symbol of this loss (4.471–74).[12] Therefore, Medea insists to the queen of the Phaeacians (4.1018–25) that she has remained chaste. Having lost her innocence, she has only her virginity,

---

[9] I would like to thank my student, Michael Sneider, for this idea.

[10] I am grateful to Gilbert Lawall for this observation.

[11] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 24–25. As he points out (164–65), when the Argonauts travel past a grim lake still reeking with the smoldering body of Phaëthon (4.595–626, the son of Helios but another name for Absyrtus [3.245, 1236]), the ghastly landscape reflects their pollution.

[12] Beye, "Jason as Love-hero," 54, and *Epic and Romance*, 156–57. His argument is based on Medea's dream, in which she imagines that Jason came to Colchis, seeking her and not the Fleece (3.619–23). Her speeches support such an interpretation. Yielding to μαχλοσύνη, sexual infatuation, she gives him the Fleece (4.367; cf. 1.805). Also, when Medea reproaches the Argonauts for caring nothing about her, now that they have the Fleece, she sounds like a maiden, seduced and abandoned (4.1049–52).

and this is temporary.

Another band of Colchians appears at the island of Scheria and demands Medea's return (4.1001–7). Ignoring Jason, Medea appeals to the Argonauts and Queen Arete. The heroes wave their spears in support, but the queen actually secures her safety. In bed that night, she urges her husband to assign Medea to Jason (4.1073–95). Alcinous, who favors the lovers, has a reputation for honesty to uphold. He adopts the ancient solution to the question of a woman's status. If she is a virgin, he tells Arete, she belongs to her father; if she has been bedded by Jason, she belongs to him (4.1098–1100). The echoes of Hesiod in his speech add to its solemnity.[13] Hallowed by tradition, his verdict states a woman's legal standing: she is her father's property until she becomes her husband's (4.1106–9).

Even though Medea is a witch, who can charm a dragon with her spells, who has betrayed her father and murdered her brother, still she must belong to a man, even though that man is Jason. To be sure, generations of Greeks had so defined the status of women, but Medea has gone far beyond conventional dispositions. Alcinous' justification, that he is protecting the fetus possibly in her womb, makes the charade more obvious when one thinks ahead to her infanticide. Therefore, the lovers, who had wished to save face by marrying in Jason's home (4.1161–64), are forced into bed (4.1164). The ceremony is made even more depressing by the determined smiles on everyone's faces.[14] The nymphs come from the rivers and mountains at Hera's bidding (4.1149–52). Orpheus sings the bridal song, and the Argonauts, fully armed, join in (4.1155–60). Jason and Medea make love on the Golden Fleece, "worrying lest Alcinous' promise not be kept" (4.1141–48, 1168–69). To survive on earlier occasions, Medea gave Jason the Fleece and murdered her brother—actions that symbolized her loss of innocence. To survive now, in joyless ceremony, she loses her virginity.

The heroes have achieved their ignominious victory and captured the Fleece; for better or worse, the lovers are united. The story is over, but the poem goes on for 500 more lines. After Jason and Medea are wedded, a storm blows the Argo to North Africa and the characters to further trials. The end of the *Argonautica* has often been criticized because its episodes follow one another without causation.[15] Why does

---

[13] Livrea, *Argonauticon: Liber Quartus*, *ad loc.*, observes that δίκην ἰθεῖαν (4.1100) echoes Hesiod, *Theog.* 86 and *Op.* 7. 224–26, 230; and that δίκην ἥτις ... ἀρίστη (4.1104) echoes *Op.* 279.

[14] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 157. Hunter points out the gloomy simile likening Medea on the eve of her wedding to a widow (4.1060–67; "Medea's Flight," 133).

[15] Called an appendix (Lesky, *History of Greek Literature*, 733), and a coda (Lawall,

the poet not employ his privilege of fast-forwarding the poem to its conclusion?

This question is obliquely addressed in the last line of the *Argonautica*, where the narrator says farewell to his heroes, and, with the second-person address, to the readers of the poem:

> ... ἀσπασίως ἀκτὰς Παγασηΐδας εἰσαπέβητε.
>
> (*Arg.* 4.1781)
>
> ... and gladly you stepped onto the shores of Pagasae.

This line echoes the one where Penelope and Odysseus lie down on the bed that has been the test and proof of their marriage:

> ... ἀσπάσιοι λέκτροιο παλαιοῦ θεσμὸν ἵκοντο.
>
> (*Od.* 23.296)
>
> ... gladly they came to the compact of their bed of old.

Aspasiôs, "gladly," echoes *aspasioi*, "glad," and each stands as the first word of its line.[16] Alexandrian scholars thought this was the last genuine line of the *Odyssey*. Once again, Apollonius alludes to Homer only to emphasize the difference between his epic and Homer's. Odysseus and Penelope rejoice in coming together in emotional intimacy; the Argonauts rejoice in separating. Nor do Jason and Medea resemble the Homeric couple. They are not "glad," but are condemned to spend long, weary years together. At the beginning of the poem, the narrator, reader, and heroes were joined in honoring Apollo. At the end of the poem, after many turns, the same three groups are joined again, in happiness at concluding the voyages—both the physical voyage and the poetic one. As a comment on narrative, the last line raises the question of why the *Argonautica* does not end with the wedding of Jason and Medea. Why, making the very mistake the real Homer may have avoided, does the narrator let the poem continue after the story has ended?

The victory of Callimachus' poetry and the defeat of epic are symbolically reenacted in the final episodes. Thematic unity replaces causality; literary victory replaces a heroic one. Behind the back of the triumphant narrator, the poet makes his own literary statement. As the

---

"Jason as Anti-Hero," 128, n. 17); this section is condemned by Eichgrün for being episodic ("Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios," 84–85).

[16] Fränkel, *Noten*, 625, n. 362; and Luigi Enrico Rossi, "La Fine Alessandrina dell' Odissea e lo ΖΗΛΟΣ ΟΜΗΡΙΚΟΣ di Apollonio Rodio," *Rivista di Filogia Classica*, 96 (1968), 151–63; Malcolm Campbell, curtly dismisses the existence of the echo in "Apollonian and Homeric Book Division," *Mnemosyne*, 36 (1983), 155. See Page for the controversy about how the *Odyssey* should have ended (*The Homeric Odyssey*, 101).

poem comes to its end, the fragmented universe recombines, with the separate narrative worlds and the narrative forces merging into one. Opposites turn into each other: love turns to hate, Homeric to Callimachean.

First, the winds, controlled by the narrator, blow the heroes to Cyrene, Callimachus' future birth-place in North Africa.[17] While the narrator demonstrates his power over his heroes, by placing them here, the poet makes it clear that this is a desolate spot.[18] The desert landscape conforms with the aridity ascribed to Callimachus' poetry by his critics.[19] Antiphanes condemned the "dry hounds of Callimachus" (ξηροὶ Καλλιμάχου πρόκυνες, *A.P.* 11.322). The reader, trapped with the heroes in a barren landscape, is inclined to join Callimachus' critics.

Everyone has cabin fever, and the boat has foundered on the shoals of Syrtes. While the characters stare at the lone and level sands, the reader sees the hexameters stretch far away. Reader and heroes join in distaste for what is happening. The union is commemorated with the blending of the earth and sky:

> ... ἄχος δ' ἕλεν εἰσορόωντας
> ἠέρα καὶ μεγάλης νῶτα χθονὸς ἠέρι ἶσα
> τηλοῦ ὑπερτείνοντα διηνεκές ... .
> (4.1245–47)
>
> ... grief took them as they looked
> at the air and the back of the great earth just like the air
> stretching out continuously far away ... .

The poet signals the unity of mood inside and outside the text by joining together two elements of the natural world, sky and earth. In Orpheus' song at the beginning of the *Argonautica*, these elements are separated (1.494–511). Their separation symbolizes the thrusting apart of narrative through the polarity of Callimachean and Homeric forces, metaphorically called "strife." As the poem ends, the elements come back together and opposites merge into a unified form.

The desert, moreover, is described with the term *diênekes*, "continuous" (4.1247), a word that follows a twisting path throughout the poem.

---

[17] Livrea points out that they are near Cyrene (*Argonauticon: Liber Quartus*, at 4.1235). To my knowledge, only Arthur Heiserman comments on Apollonius' having chosen to devote so much space to the Argonauts' visit to the area around Callimachus' home and to the establishment of Callimachus' ancestors, Euphemus' descendants, on Thera (*The Novel before the Novel: Essays and Discussions about the Beginnings of Prose Fiction in the West* [Chicago, 1977], 35–36).

[18] The dreariness expressed in landscape was noticed by Wilamowitz, *Hellenistische Dichtung*, Vol. 2, 226; Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 164–65.

[19] The Florentine Scholiast records that Callimachus was criticized for the "leanness" τὸ κάτισ[χνον] of his poetry (Pfeiffer, *Callimachus I*, 3, lines 8–9).

From the beginning to the Symplegades, "continuous" meant "Homeric," evoking the simplicity and directness of the Homeric manner. In the narrative between the magic rocks, it means "pseudo-Homeric," pretending to have an epic sincerity. In its final use, describing the desert near Callimachus' birthplace, the word evokes Callimachean poetics. For Apollonius, "continuous" means both "Callimachean" and "Homeric." The single-minded adoption either poetics should be considered naïve. The combination of literary values makes the story dynamic, alive, and therefore deceptive.

Moreover, as argued earlier, the earth and sky correspond to two worlds of narrative—the heroes' and the reader's (above, pp. 93–95). In the poem's final movement, the lines converge, as the worlds reunite and complete that pulse of separation and union that gives the *Argonautica* its illusory animation. Now, while the sky merges with the earth, two of the narrative worlds come together because of the reader's empathy with the Argonauts, who are trapped in the desert near Callimachus' future birthplace.

Carrying their boat through the desert, the Argonauts arrive at the Garden of the Hesperides, which should be a delightful place to visit on one's honeymoon. There, Jason and Medea find a scene of desolation, one that mirrors their own. Apollonius describes the Garden in lurid detail:

> … ἷξον δ' ἱερὸν πέδον, ᾧ ἔνι Λάδων
> εἰς ἔτι που χθιζὸν παγχρύσεα ῥύετο μῆλα
> χώρῳ ἐν Ἄτλαντος, χθόνιος ὄφις· ἀμφὶ δὲ νύμφαι
> Ἑσπερίδες ποίπνυον ἐφίμερον ἀείδουσαι·
> δὴ τότε γ' ἤδη τῆμος ὑφ' Ἡρακλῆι δαϊχθείς
> μήλειον βέβλητο ποτὶ στύπος, οἰόθι δ' ἄκρη
> οὐρῇ ἔτι σκαίρεσκεν, ἀπὸ κρατὸς δὲ κελαινήν
> ἄχρις ἐπ' ἄκνηστιν κεῖτ' ἄπνοος· ἐν δὲ λιπόντων
> ὕδρης Λερναίης χόλον αἵματι πικρὸν ὀιστῶν,
> μυῖαι πυθομένοισιν ἐφ' ἕλκεσι τερσαίνοντο.
>
> (4.1396–1405)

> They came to the sacred plain in which Ladon,
> an earthborn serpent, guarded the golden apples
> in the land of Atlas, until yesterday; around him the nymphs,
> the Hesperides, were busy, singing beautifully.
> But then, slain by Heracles, he lay cast down
> at the trunk of an apple tree; only the tip
> of his tail still twitched. From his head all along his black spine
> he lay lifeless. Because of the bitter poison
> of the Lernean hydra left by the arrows in his blood,
> flies were withering on his rotting wounds.

Adapting a common metaphor, the poet offers a splendid image for contemporary epic poetry. Sappho calls her poems the roses of the

Muses (frag. 55, Page). Pindar views himself the guardian of the Muses' golden apples (frag. 288, Schroeder, cf. *Ol.* 9.27, *Pyth.* 6.1–3, *Nem.* 6.33). Very different from the gardens of Sappho and Pindar, this depressing scene symbolizes the failure of expectations and morbid psychology of the *Argonautica.* The golden apples are gone; there is nothing left to look at except dead flies on a rotted corpse. An angry Hesperid explains why. "Some man" has passed through, dressed in a lion's skin, carrying a bow and club. He killed the snake, snatched the golden apples, and left (4.1432–46). The costume immediately identifies him as Heracles. Like the twitching tail of Ladon, the heroic impulse still exists among the Argonauts, but to no avail. Heracles' erstwhile comrades, try to catch up with their hero, but only Lynceus can glimpse him (4.1477–80). Heracles will ascend to Olympus soon after this final labor. Left in the ravaged garden, the Argonauts have only nostalgia for the old-fashioned values of earlier times.

The reader is left with the uneasy sense of melting values. An epic hero is transformed into a Callimachean one. The Hesperid does not recognize Heracles, and alludes to him as "whoever" (4.1433), a pronoun hitherto applied to Jason. "Whoever brought them together" leads the Argonauts (1.347). "Whoever is the leader" is summoned to Hypsipyle's bed (1.704, 713). Pretending indifference to Jason, Medea tells her maids that she has arranged to meet the leader of the Argonauts, "whoever he is" (3.905). Circe drives Medea away with the man she has won for herself, "whoever he is" (4.746). As the poem comes to its end, opposites meet. Heracles, like Jason, is "whoever," the man in the lion's skin. In his lack of an inner core, the Homeric Heracles becomes Callimachean. Moreover, his actions can be described with the brevity Callimachus demands. Heracles' action replicates Jason's theft of the Fleece, though at a different pace.[20] Both adventures feature a hero, a serpent, a maiden, a tree, and a golden talisman. Heracles kills the snake, snatches the apples, and is gone. His violent efficiency throws into relief Jason's leisurely seduction of Medea.

The boundaries of competing esthetics are further dissolved by the tiny spring kicked open by Heracles (πῖδαξ, 4.1451, 1456). In his *Hymn to Apollo* (*H.* 2.112), Callimachus uses this spring to symbolize his poetry.[21] Heracles, representative of epic, opens up a spring of Callimachean poetry. From the death of the old comes the life of the new. The new, however, contains the seeds of its own dissolution. As the

---

[20] Lawall, "Jason as Anti-Hero," 129.

[21] Williams, *Hymn to Apollo*, 98–99; Wimmel, *Kallimachos in Rom*, 80; Kambylis, *Die Dichterweihe*, 89, 146.

Homeric hero becomes Callimachean, so the Callimachean heroine has a Telchinian eye.

In the Callimachean desert, the Argonauts are saved by the Homeric Heracles. In the Homeric element, the ocean, they are saved by Medea, a Callimachean heroine. She destroys Talos, the bronze giant who protects the harbor of Crete. Apollonius' readers would have visualized Talos as an animated Colossus of Rhodes. The Colossus was a bronze statue of the Sun. In his lexicon (under Talos), Hesychius defines Talos as the Sun. If, as suggested earlier, Callimachus uses the Colossus to symbolize epic poetry, Medea's victory over Talos in the *Argonautica* symbolizes the victory of Callimachean poetry over Homeric. A walking bronze statue, a living Colossus, Talos crumples, dragging down epic poetry.[22] Medea has made the Aegean safe for Callimachean poetry.

Like the Colossus, Talos is an epic hero enormously expanded. These heroes are encased in bronze armor; Talos is made entirely of bronze. They are larger than men, and Talos is a giant. Moreover, like Achilles, he has a vulnerable ankle, hence his name, Talos, "Ankle." Medea's offer to dispose of Talos echoes Aeneas' similar offer in the *Iliad*.[23] Aeneas promises to defeat Achilles even if Achilles himself boasts to be entirely of bronze (παγχάλκεος εὔχεται εἶναι, *Il.* 20.102). Medea claims she will defeat Talos even if he *is* entirely of bronze (παγχάλκεον ἴσχει / ὃν δέμας, 4.1655–56), as of course he is. Talos is far more formidable than Achilles. The ease with which Medea destroys him shows her superiority to Achilles, with whom she is destined to share an afterlife (*Arg.* 4.811–16).

The loss of virginity symbolizes a woman's defeat in the battle of the sexes. Thus, the nymph Sinope is victorious over her suitors (2.946–54), because none of them "mastered" her (δάμασσεν, 2.954). Although technically "mastered" by Jason in that she loses her virginity, Medea is far from diminished. Instead, she "masters" Talos (4.1654, 1658)—another indication that supremacy has passed from the male sex to the female. Access to sexuality only increases her power. As a consequence of her moment of "folly," when she hands the potions to Jason, her soul has hardened. After throwing herself on the mercy of 50 male strangers, contriving the murder of her brother, being humiliated by her aunt Circe, being handed over to male control by Alcinous, and spending

---

[22] That Talos' description may have been suggested by the Colossus of Rhodes has been suggested by E. V. Rieu in the introduction to his translation, *The Voyage of the Argo* (Baltimore, 1959), 25. For the suggestion that the Colossus of Rhodes was inspired by the legend of Talos, see Buslepp, "Talos," Roscher's *Lexikon*, Vol. 5 (1916–24), 24.

[23] Livrea notes the echo (*Argonauticon: Liber Quartus*, at 4.1655).

her honeymoon in a desert, Medea has hardened. Her rage and hatred, deprived of a victim until now, are unleashed on Talos:

> Ἔνθα δ' ἀοιδῇσιν μειλίσσετο μέλπε δὲ Κῆρας
> θυμοβόρους, Ἀΐδαο θοὰς κύνας, αἳ περὶ πᾶσαν
> ἠέρα δινεύουσαι ἐπὶ ζωοῖσιν ἄγονται.
> Τὰς γουναζομένη τρὶς μὲν παρεκέκλετ' ἀοιδαῖς,
> τρὶς δὲ λιταῖς· θεμένη δὲ κακὸν νόον, ἐχθοδοποῖσιν
> ὄμμασι χαλκείοιο Τάλω ἐμέγηρεν ὀπωπάς·
> λευγαλέον δ' ἐπὶ οἷ πρῖεν χόλον, ἐκ δ' ἀΐδηλα
> δείκηλα προΐαλλεν, ἐπιζάφελον κοτέουσα.
>
> (4.1665–72)
>
> Then with spells she cozened and invoked the soul-devouring
> spirits of death, the swift hounds of hell, which,
> circling around all the air, move against the living.
> Kneeling, she summoned them three times with songs,
> three times with prayers. Taking on an evil mind, with hateful
> eyes she bewitched the eyes of bronze Talos.
> She gnashed her teeth in savage rage against him, and,
> raging furiously, she sent out invisible phantoms.

Medea's fellow Colchians feared to meet her glance (3.885–86); now we see why. She has the evil eye, which she directs against Talos: whom she bewitches (literally, "grudged") "with hateful eyes" (ἐχθοδοποῖσιν ὄμμασι ... ἐμέγηρεν).[24] Talos stumbles, scrapes the delicate skin over the vein of his ankle, and dies. Medea's victory over Talos is Callimachean in its effect and anti-Callimachean in its nature. She destroys a giant symbol of epic poetry, but her weapon, the evil eye, belongs to Callimachus' enemies, the Telchines. Once again, the poem merges opposites hitherto held in dynamic tension. The Callimachean heroine has a Telchinian eye.

As a visible token of Medea's evil eye, a black cloud envelops the boat and its heroes (4.1694–1701). The cloud is dispersed by Apollo, who opposes the demon of the evil eye, Phthonos, in Callimachus' hymn (*H. Ap.* 2.107). Callimachus told the same story of the god's epiphany, and the prayer of the narrator's Jason echoes the one of Callimachus' Jason on that occasion (4.1704–5; *Ait.* frag. 18.6–7). The allusion to Callimachus and the narrator's address of the god (4.1706–9) tie this epiphany to the one earlier in Book 2 (above, pp. 80–82). The parallels prevent the reader from regarding Apollo's appearance here as a sign of divine favor. The god left halfway through the poem; now, he returns to Olympus because the poem is almost over.

---

[24] Matthew Dickie, "Talos Bewitched: Magic, Atomic Theory and Paradoxography in Apollonius *Argonautica* 4.1638–88," *Papers of the Leeds International Latin Seminar*, 6 (1990), 271.

During Apollo's absence, a new kind of hero has arisen, a woman endowed with terrible power and the forcefulness of Homeric grandeur. Her victory over Talos evokes two earlier conflicts bringing credit to the heroes. The narrator refuses to describe how the Argo was built (1.18–19), but the similes adorning heroic combat create an illusion that the poem is being pounded together like a boat. Vanquished by the Argonauts, the giants lay on the sand like soaking boards waiting for the bolts (1.1003–5). The image of ship-building repeats itself under the hammer-blows of the boxing match. Amycus and Polydeuces strike each other again and again, like two men hammering bolts into boards to build ships (2.79–82). The boards of the previous simile now receive the clamps for which they have been soaked. The battles fought by the heroes help build the boat that carries their story. Poetry is symbolized both by the boat and the process of boat-building.

Medea's victory over Talos brings the reader simultaneously backwards and forwards in time. A tree falls on a mountain:

> ἀλλ' ὥς τίς τ' ἐν ὄρεσσι πελωρίη ὑψόθι πεύκη,
> τὴν τε θοοῖς πελέκεσσιν ἔθ' ἡμιπλῆγα λιπόντες
> ὑλοτόμοι δρυμοῖο κατήλυθον, ἡ δ' ὑπὸ νυκτί
> ῥιπῇσιν μὲν πρῶτα τινάσσεται, ὕστερον αὖτε
> πρυμνόθεν ἐξεαγεῖσα κατήριπεν ... .
>
> (4.1682–86)

> Just as a huge pine tree high in the mountains
> which woodsmen left still half-cut with their sharp axes
> when they returned from the forest, and in the night
> it is first shaken by winds, but later
> broken from its stump it crashes down ... .

When the pine tree falls, the reader completes the tree's movement with the opening lines of Euripides' *Medea*:

> Εἴθ' ὤφελ' Ἀργοῦς μὴ διαπτάσθαι σκάφος
> Κόλχων ἐς αἶαν κυανέας Συμπληγάδας,
> μηδ' ἐν νάπαισι Πηλίου πεσεῖν ποτε
> τμηθεῖσα πεύκη ... .
>
> (*Med.* 1–4)

> Would that the hull of the Argo had not flown
> through the clashing rocks into the land of the Colchians,
> or that the pine tree cut in the groves of Pelion
> had not fallen ... .

By alluding to Euripides' lines, the poet has the reader span the whole tale, from the Argo's construction, before the poem opens, to Medea's murder of her children, after the its end. Just as the Argo, pushed by Athena's hand, makes it through the Symplegades and into the next sea (2.598–99) so the reader enters the poem at the junctures where the poet breaks off. The more information we bring to the poem, the more

we contribute to the poem's meaning, and, ironically, the more we are deceived. By recalling the rest of Euripides' play, we run the danger of meeting Medea face to face.

In the final episode, the story of Euphemus, the reader is pointed in the direction of Callimachus, whose poetic theories have motivated the story. Here the narrator draws on Pindar's account of the Argonauts.[25] Pindar introduces the story to praise the king of Cyrene, who traced his descent from the Argonaut Euphemus. The narrator of the *Argonautica* also praises a man descended from Euphemus, and in Callimachus' honor he centers the last episode on Callimachus' ancestor. Like Pindar, the narrator tells the story of how Triton gives a handful of earth to Euphemus. This is destined to grow into the island of Thera, from where, generations later, Euphemus' descendants would colonize Cyrene. The narrator stresses his honorific purpose by echoing the phrase Pindar uses for Triton's gift, "fateful glebe" (δαιμονίη βῶλαξ, *Arg.* 4.1734; *Pyth.* 4.37).

The narrator goes beyond Pindar in honoring Euphemus' achievement. In the *Argonautica*, the handful of earth is not a reflection of the Golden Fleece, but rather the only significant achievement of the voyage. Geography reflects the moral opposition, because the talismans are set at opposite ends of the world from each other, in Colchis and Libya (1.82–85). The gift of earth is defined as non-heroic by Heracles himself. "No god will give you the Fleece," he declares when he rouses the Argonauts from Lemnos (1.870–71). A god simply hands Euphemus the earth, and so it cannot be regarded as a prize. The dreams bound to the Fleece go down to Hell (4.384–85). The earth promises a future. The Fleece is the heroic dream that lures men to disaster. In the sandy waste, the glebe offers hope of a more healthy ambition.

Euphemus was brought to prominence previously in the *Argonautica*.

---

[25] In general, Apollonius follows the account of Pindar, a poet popular in Alexandria, and includes all the Argonauts from Pindar's list. See M. T. Smiley, "Callimachus' Debt to Pindar and Others," *Hermathena*, 40 (1919), 46–72; and E. B. Clapp, "Two Pindaric Poems of Theocritus," CP, 8 (1913), 310–16. Both Pindar and Apollonius tell the story that the Argonauts carried their boat across the desert (*Arg.* 4.1381–90; *Pyth.* 4.25–27). Of the many lists of Argonauts, Pindar's was the only one Apollonius used entirely, as was pointed out by O. Jessen, *Prolegomena in Catalogum Argonauticorum* (Berlin, 1889), 16 (known to me from Carspecken, "Apollonius Rhodius," 47, n. 36).

Because Pindar and his audience accepted the heroic values of Homeric poetry, Pindar's Jason is heroic and his Medea has only a prophetic role (*Pyth.* 4.25–27, 9–58). She has a much more active role in the *Argonautica* because of the narrator's cynical attitude towards heroism. Jason gets the speaking roles, but Medea faces the bronze giant. A scene on Jason's cloak illustrates the difference between the Jason of *Pythian* 4 and the Jason of the *Argonautica*. Pindar's Jason was thought by onlookers to resemble Tityus (*Pyth.* 4.90–91), the giant who tried to rape Leto. On Jason's cloak, Apollo is presented as punishing Tityus (1.759–62), and Jason looks like Apollo (1.307–10).

At the decisive moment when the Argonauts are about to pass through the Symplegades, Euphemus holds the dove, whose fate determines the heroes' voyage (2.534–36, 555–56). To indicate that his own nervousness matches his heroes', that he has no control over whether or not the Symplegades will crush the Argo, the narrator chooses Callimachus' ancestor to hold the dove. Who better than Euphemus can secure safe passage through the rocks? He holds the dove in his hand, and the scene is made more vivid by mention of the dove's trembling (2.534–36); at the right moment he throws it from the boat (2.561–62). At the poem's conclusion, he also takes Triton's glebe in his hand (4.1562), and, instructed by Jason, throws it into the sea (4.1756–57). The passage through Symplegades, traditionally associated with Jason's quest for the Fleece (*Od.* 12.69–72), is connected to Euphemus' casting away of the glebe. This is the Argonauts' lasting achievement.

Pindar frames his poem with allusions to Euphemus: his throwing the piece of earth overboard (*Pyth.* 4.9–51) and the Argonauts' stay on Lemnos (*Pyth.* 4.251–57), where Euphemus impregnated one of the Lemnian women. In reverse order these two events frame the *Argonautica* (1.609–909, 4.1731–64). In Apollonius' version, Euphemus dreams that it has become a woman, with whom he makes love.[26] The dream completes what was begun on Lemnos. There, Euphemus makes love to a nameless Lemnian woman, the ancestress of Callimachus. Here, Euphemus makes love to the earth, which, growing into the island of Thera, will be the motherland of Callimachus' ancestors. In the first important episode, the Lemnian women are likened to the earth, with distinctions obscured in *doubles entendres* about fertility. In the last important episode of the poem, the earth becomes a woman, who receives Euphemus' seed. After their love-making, she tells Euphemus the future:

> "Τρίτωνος γένος εἰμί, τεῶν τροφός, ὦ φίλε, παίδων,
> οὐ κούρη· Τρίτων γὰρ ἐμοὶ Λιβύη τε τοκῆες.
> Ἀλλά με Νηρῆος παρακάτθεο παρθενικῇσιν
> ἂμ πέλαγος ναίειν Ἀνάφης σχεδόν· εἶμι δ' ἐς αὐγάς
> ἠελίου μετόπισθε, τεοῖς νεπόδεσσιν ἑτοίμη."
>
> (4.1741–45)

[26] Apollonius sets Lemnos after a brief stop at the tomb of Dolops (1.585–91), and follows Euphemus' story by a brief account of the Argonauts' stop on Aegina (4.1765–72). The framing episodes indicate a change in mood from leisure ("they lingered," ἐλινύεσκον, 1.589) to haste. Vian argues that Apollonius followed a source not interested in the long-term consequences of the Lemnian episode because he does not mention Euphemus' lover (*Argonautiques I*, 23–24); but to drag Euphemus' name into the Lemnian adventure would have ruined the confrontation of Jason and Heracles.

"I am the child of Triton, the nurse of your children, my friend,
not a girl. For Triton and Libya are my parents.
But set me down among the daughters of Nereus
to live in the sea near Anaphe. Later I will come into the light
of the sun, ready for your descendants."

As the motherland of Callimachus' ancestors, she is Callimachean in being "slender," a term Callimachus uses to express literary approval (ὀλίγη, 4.1736; *Ait.* frag. 1.9; *H. Ap.* 2.112). She also speaks Alexandrian Greek. She tells Euphemus that she as an island will await his *nepodes*, "descendants" (4.1745), a word unintelligible to the man she addresses, but not to his descendants, Apollonius' readers. In Homer, the word means "web-footed" (applied to seals in *Od.* 4.404); in Alexandria, "descendants," and this meaning was known to be recent.[27] Therefore, her words are really spoken not to Euphemus, but to the Alexandrian reader, who will extend her prophecy to the present.

The narrator gives a brief history of Euphemus' descendants as far as their migration to Thera:

οὐδ' ἀλίωσεν ὑπόκρισιν Αἰσονίδαο
Εὔφημος, βῶλον δὲ θεοπροπίῃσιν ἰανθείς
ἧκεν ὑποβρυχίην. Τῆς δ' ἔκτοθι νῆσος ἀέρθη
Καλλίστη, παίδων ἱερὴ τροφὸς Εὐφήμοιο·
οἳ πρὶν μέν ποτε δὴ Σιντηΐδα Λῆμνον ἔναιον,
Λήμνου τ' ἐξελαθέντες ὑπ' ἀνδράσι Τυρσηνοῖσιν
Σπάρτην εἰσαφίκανον ἐφέστιοι· ἐκ δὲ λιπόντας
Σπάρτην Αὐτεσίωνος ἐὺς πάις ἤγαγε Θήρας
Καλλίστην ἐπὶ νῆσον, ἀμείψατο δ' οὔνομα, Θήρα,
ἐκ σέθεν. Ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν μετόπιν γένετ' Εὐφήμοιο.

(4.1755–64)

And Euphemus did not leave Jason's answer unfulfilled,
but, cheered by the prophecy, he threw the glebe
under the waves. From it an island arose,
Calliste, the sacred nurse of Euphemus' descendants.
They first lived in Sintian Lemnos
and having been driven out of Lemnos by the Etruscans
they arrived at Sparta as suppliants. When they left Sparta,
Theras, the noble son of Autesion, led them
to the island Calliste, and changed its name to Thera
from his own name. But these things happened after Euphemus.

The narrator breaks off with words that echo Callimachus:

Ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν μετόπιν γένετ' Εὐφήμοιο.

(4.1764)

---

[27] Apollonius Sophista, 115.31 (known to me from Livrea, *Argonauticon: Liber Quartus*, at 4.1745). The word is found in Callimachus (frags. 66.1, 186.2, 222.2, 533) and Theocritus (*Id.* 17.25).

But these things happened after Euphemus.

Callimachus concludes an episode of the Argonauts' journey with a similar temporal perspective. Having recounted the fates of the Colchians who pursued the Argonauts to the Phaeacians' island, Callimachus breaks off with the words:[28]

Καὶ τὰ μὲν ὣς ἤμελλε μετὰ χρόνον ἐκτελέεσθαι.
(*Ait.* frag. 12.6)

These things were to be fulfilled after a time.

Echoing a Callimachean mannerism, the narrator leaves the reader to finish the story: how colonists from Thera settled Cyrene and how a descendant of their kings, Callimachus, put an end to epic poetry. His breaking off compels the reader to rush into the vacuum to provide details of dynastic and literary history and to join the past and present.

The mythological events reflected by the narrative culminate in an actual event, the birth of Callimachus. The actions in the poem affect the world of the poem's readers. At the same time, Callimachus' birth affects the events of the poem. The whole voyage is under the control of a Callimachean narrator, who sends instructions through prophets and talking birds, or simply blows the heroes wherever he wishes. Viewed this way, the *Argonautica* is not an epic poem, but an extended *aition* to explain the death of epic poetry.

---

[28] Pfeiffer notes the echo (*Callimachus* I, at *Ait.* frag. 12.6).

CHAPTER NINE

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Jason has the Fleece, Medea has Jason, Heracles has the apples, and the narrator has triumphed over his poem. Apollonius too has a goal: not just to deceive a reader, but to deceive readers conscious of their own deception. He signals this intention by describing characters inside the poem who allow themselves to be deceived by song and works of art. The song of Orpheus (1.496–511), the cloak of Jason (1.721–67), and the golden ball of Zeus (3.132–41) are connected both to one other and to the *Argonautica* itself.[1] The song, the cloak, and the toy offer models of the poem which teach the reader to visualize the globe of the earth and its individual scenes.

Made up of golden rings, *kykla*, sewn together, the golden ball is a model of the cosmos described in Orpheus' song.[2] There, the universe was in motion, with the earth, sky, and sea pulling away from each other and ringed by the orbits of sun, moon, and stars. In Zeus's toy, the orb of the earth is formed as a finished product, still ringed around with *kykla*. These *kykla* may allude to the imaginary circles of longitude and latitude together with their counterparts in the sky (Strabo 2.5.3–5; cf. Aratus, *Phaen.* 454–558).[3] The toy model of the earth is also a model of the *Argonautica*, as conceived in three dimensional space.[4]

The imaginary circles dividing the globe in the geographers' models are analogous to the circular voyages traced on the globe inside the story. The Argonauts circle the world from Thessaly northeast to Colchis, then west to Italy, south to Libya, and finally back to Thessaly. The poet defines this circle: Libya is as far from Colchis as the sunset

---

[1] Orpheus' song of creation closes with the reign of Cronus, with Zeus still a child in the Cretan cave, before the Cyclopes made the thunderbolt for him (1.508–11). Mention of the thunderbolt connects the song with Jason's cloak, in whose first scene the Cyclopes hammer out a thunderbolt (1.730–34). Mention of Zeus's childhood in the Cretan cave connects the song with the toy that he played with before he got the thunderbolt (3.132–34). For other parallels, see Hunter, *Literary Studies*, 163.

[2] For Empedocles' notion that the cosmos was round when governed by love, see Hunter, *Book III*, at 135.

[3] For astronomical geography, see Claude Nicolet, *Space, Geography, and Politics in the Early Roman Empire*, Jerome Lectures 19 (Ann Arbor, 1991), 59–60.

[4] The Alexandrians used the image of the toy to symbolize their poetry, which was, on the surface, playful and frivolous. See above, chap. 7, n. 24.

from the sunrise (1.82–85). Another circle is traversed by Heracles. At first, he travels with the heroes, but his journey snaps apart from theirs at the close of Book 1. The two circles intersect just before the poem ends, when the Argonauts miss Heracles by one day in the Libyan desert (4.1436).

A third circle on the globe is traced by the two halves of Aeetes' fleet. Two sets of Colchians pursue the Argo in separate arcs of the same circle (4.303–6, 1001–3). With one half of Aeetes' fleet, Absyrtus, Medea's brother, pursues the Argonauts to the mouth of the Ister, where he is then murdered by Jason. The other half of Aeetes' fleet takes the southerly route through the Symplegades and meet the Argonauts on the island of the Phaeacians. This circle lacks a section: the distance between Absyrtus' murder and Alcinous' judgment. The reader who fills in the missing arc must visualize a globe, the real world, which then merges with the world within the poem. Once again, the reader who helps create the world is deceived by it.

The task of drawing the world is analogous to the task of writing the story. The reader has been called upon before to supply characters have left out of their stories. Jason interrupts his story of Ariadne; the narrator breaks off his account of Euphemus' descendants (3.1096, 4.1764). In the first case, the reader supplies Theseus' desertion of Ariadne, and in the second, Euphemus' descendants from Theras down to Callimachus. We are carried along part of the way. Then the voice stops and our momentum carries us to the end. As we fill in our side of the story with our own knowledge and imagination, we join with the poet in creating a world. Our reward is to be deceived by it.

The golden ball helps us envisage the three-dimensional world on which the Argonauts' voyage is traced. Jason's cloak teaches us to see the events that take place in that world. The first six pictures of the cloak correspond to the six sections of the *Argonautica*, which is divided by book endings and magical rocks (above, pp. 99–100).[5] The first picture on the cloak shows the Cyclopes making a thunderbolt for Zeus, which still needs a ray (1.730–34). Another enforcer of Zeus's will, Heracles needs only a few labors before he can fulfill his destiny Zeus and rise to Olympus (1.1317–20). In the second panel, Amphion and Zethus construct the city of Thebes with the contrasting methods of art and force. The corresponding section of the poem, the first half of Book 2, establishes that the poem will be governed by the former. Polydeuces' boxing match demonstrates the superiority of skill over strength;

[5] For discussion of the cloak, see Lawall, "Jason as Anti-Hero," 154–58; Collins, "Studies," 65–85; George, "Poet and Characters," 48–52.

Phineus instructs the Argonauts to trust their fortunes to seduction rather than force. The opening sections on the cloak and in the poem describe the beginnings of things. The unfinished thunderbolt and Thebes, still lacking its towers, correspond to the first two sections of the poem, up to the Argonauts' meeting with Phineus. In Book 1, the Argonauts are committed to Heracles' leadership; in first section of Book 2, even when Heracles is gone, they have not abandoned his heroic path.

The third picture on the cloak shows Aphrodite admiring her image on Ares' shield; in the corresponding section of the poem Callimachean and Telchinian readers see their reflections in Apollo and King Lycus. On the cloak, the goddess of love is reflected in a symbol of hate; in the poem, hatred is beamed back at both kinds of reader by the Callimachean god and the Telchinian king. To continue reading, we must summon up a countervailing force to overcome the resistance so plainly shown to us. This force is love, the power that carries us through the ivory gates into the fiction.

Homer too points to the barriers between reality and fiction in order to have them torn down. Odysseus suddenly stops his story in the middle of Hades because the hour is growing late and he needs to make an early start (*Od.* 11. 328–32). Fortunately for literature, Alcinous insists that he continue, praising his story and promising more tripods. While they discuss all this inside the poem, Homer's listeners become aware that they are eavesdropping on a Bronze Age dinner party. Odysseus' story told in the first person permitted an easy identification of Homer's audience with Odysseus' gracious hosts and of their poet with the hero. When Odysseus stops his story, third-person narrative is resumed; the audience's passive identification with the internal audience is interrupted. The desire of the audience to hear the rest of Odysseus' adventures underground carries it across the barriers set up in plain sight. From now on when Odysseus continues his story, the deception of Homer's audience is more powerful because it is partly self-induced. Like Homer, Apollonius shows us why we should reject the poem, confident that by resisting this option we will be more committed even than before.

The next three pictures on the cloak reflect the events contained inside the poem. Book 3, with its dangerous courtship and easy battle is foreshadowed by the next scene on the cloak. The sons of Electryon try to repel the raiding Teleboans. An important result of that battle is the birth of Heracles. When Amphitryon is away fighting the Teleboans on behalf of his father-in-law, Electryon, Zeus impregnates Alcmena with Heracles. Like the picture, Book 3 is a seduction concealed by a battle.

Book 4 is divided in two by the other set of magical rocks, the

Planctae. In the first section, Jason and Medea flee from Aeetes, who sends after them his entire army—an army that never returns. In the corresponding picture, Oenomaus races Pelops, who stands in the victorious chariot with Hippodamia. Oenomaus is depicted as aiming his spear at Pelops' back, but plunging to his death. He is defeated by the superior guile of his rival. As Medea accompanies Jason on the Argo, so Hippodamia stands in the chariot with Pelops.

Finally, the sixth picture on the cloak shows Apollo slaying the giant Tityus. His victory is a Callimachean victory: of a new god over an old god; of the small over the huge; of art over nature. In the section of the poem corresponding to this picture, Medea slays Talos with her bright eyes. The various victories of the Callimachean narrator are summed up in this one act of destruction.

At the center of Jason's cloak stands the image of the living ram, from which the Golden Fleece was shorn. As it talks to Phrixus, Apollonius breaks the boundaries between his realm and the reader's by directly addressing us. Before describing the cloak, he assures us that we would not be able to see the pictures because of the cloak's radiance.

> Τῆς μὲν ῥηίτερόν κεν ἐς ἠέλιον ἀνιόντα
> ὄσσε βάλοις ἢ κεῖνο μεταβλέψειας ἔρευθος . . . .
>
> (1.725–26)
>
> More easily would you cast your eyes on the rising sun
> than look at that glow . . . .

Obviously, the reason we cannot see the pictures is that they do not exist. To cooperate with the poet, we must pretend we cannot see the pictures because our eyes cannot focus. When our vision has cleared, the scenes depicted on the cloak take on an added realism.

Apollonius is justly admired for the vividness of his descriptions, which create an illusion in the reader's mind. Besides the pictures on the cloak, scenes inside the story are treated by him as though they were descriptions of paintings. He often freezes the forward progress of the story to create a picture. Beye describes the Argo's Departure:

> The sailing out of the *Argo* (1.536–68) is another example of Apollonius' ability at staging a scene. He begins with a simile which describes the mood of the scene and the men: the crew cleaving the sea with their oars, to the rhythm of Orpheus' lyre, are compared to youths dancing in honor of Apollo to the sound of the lyre. Then Apollonius moves his reader farther away from the scene. He describes the armor glistening from the ship as it speeds along. We are taken still farther away with the comparison of the *Argo*'s wake to a path stretching over a green plain. This takes us to the horizon line where the poet pauses to recapitulate our now greatly enlarged view by describing the scene from the Olympian vantage point: all the gods, he says, looked down from heaven. Thereafter the poet begins to redirect our focus, moving us down and closing the view when he says that the nymphs gazed down from the top of Mount

> Pelion upon the heroes. Thereafter he continues the downward movement now to the lowest point and adds a scale figure to the foreground. "Down from the mountaintop came Chiron ... and at the surf he waved, calling out bon voyage" (553–56). The final sentence of the description ("And his wife, carrying Peleus' son Achilles, displayed the child for his father") ties the foreground and the frame into the picture, adding a sentimental touch of human interest as well. The sense of perspective in this description suggests a painter, and critics have found the same painterly sensibility elsewhere.[6]

The pictures in the literary art gallery have observers, whose reactions guide our own response.[7] They are, however, misleading. The grand audience assembled by the Argo's departure creates an expectation that the story will be worth watching. Heracles is studiously ignored by 50 Argonauts, when the oar breaks in his hand (1.1168–71). Aphrodite, who smiles at Eros' game with Ganymede (3.114–28), savors the humorous side of Medea's future suffering. The Moon thinks she sees Medea hurrying to a young man (4.54–65), when the reader knows instead she is fleeing her father. Hephaestus, Hera, and Athena watch the Nereids toss the Argo across the Planctae (4.956–60). Hera is in suspense, while the reader finds amusement at the simile that likens the Argo to a beach ball. The refracted image of the poet in the narrator parallels the refracted images of the reader in characters who, like Apollo and Lycus, undervalue the poem's quality or, like the internal viewers, misinterpret its events.

Apollonius expects us both to write his book and to illustrate it. He hands us the brush and enough information to paint the scenes he describes. The pictures on the cloak grow clearer the more we know about illusionistic techniques.[8] To visualize the Cyclopes at work on Zeus's thunderbolt, we create an artistic interplay of light and dark. Aphrodite's reflection requires a more subtle imagination, the ability to distinguish between an image and its reflection. The more we know about art, the more realistic the pictures become. If we cooperate with Apollonius, we can see the pictures; if we are really clever, we will be deceived into thinking they are real.

And so we are left at the end of the cloak's description, staring at the image of a ram, trying to make it come to life, hoping to hear its words:

---

[6] Beye, *Epic and Romance*, 31; Zanker, *Realism in Alexandrian Poetry*, 70–73; Edward Phinney, "Hellenistic Painting and the Poetic Style of Apollonius," *CJ*, 62 (1967), 145–49. As Webster remarks, "Apollonius saw like a painter" (*Hellenistic Poetry and Art*, 71). Barbara Hughes Fowler suggests that Apollonius even invites the reader to visualize the buildings of Aeetes' palace in perspective (*The Hellenistic Aesthetic* [Madison, 1989], 171).

[7] Phinney, "Hellenistic Painting," 146.

[8] A. H. Shapiro, "Jason's Cloak," *TAPA*, 110 (1980), 278–82.

Ἐν καὶ Φρίξος ἔην Μινυήιος, ὡς ἐτεόν περ
εἰσαΐων κριοῦ, ὁ δ' ἄρ' ἐξενέποντι ἐοικώς.
Κείνους κ' εἰσορόων ἀκέοις ψεύδοιό τε θυμόν,
ἐλπόμενος πυκινήν τιν' ἀπὸ σφείων ἐσακοῦσαι
βάξιν, ὅτευ καὶ δηρὸν ἐπ' ἐλπίδι θηήσαιο.

(1.763–67)

Inside was also the Minyan Phrixus as though he were really
listening to the ram and it looked like someone speaking.
Looking at them you would be silent and deceive your soul,
hoping to hear some thoughtful words from them,
and for a long time you would watch it in hope.

Apollonius has convinced us of pictures that do not exist. Staring at a ram we cannot see, we try to hear its speech when we do hear words spoken in our own voice.[9] According to an ancient conceit a poem is a speaking picture; a picture is a silent poem: *ut pictura poesis* (Horace, *Ars Poetica* 361).[10] By having us think we see what we cannot and try to hear when we can, Apollonius achieves his poetic goal.

At the center of deceptions within the poem, the Golden Fleece symbolizes both the reader's deception and the poet's quest. The Fleece is a golden mirror reflecting whatever the characters most value. Aeetes gives the Fleece a metaphorical meaning when he accuses Jason of wishing to seize his throne (3.375–76). For him, the Fleece symbolizes royal power, just as it did for Atreus and Thyestes (Apollodorus, *Epitome* 2.11–13). Aeetes is wrong about Jason's intentions, and yet manages to bring his fears to fulfillment by launching and losing his entire military force (4.511–21, 1206–11).

The Fleece gleams out as the golden prize of valor to heroes like the *megalopsychus*, "great-souled man," of Aristotle (*Nic. Eth.* 4.3). Apollonius' heroes sail after it, as Pindar's once did, but without heroic result. To realize their heroic vision, the Argonauts must face heroic challenges, which they and the reader are led to expect (1.440–42, 2.869–70, 877). In the end, when the Argonauts rely on magic rather than labor, Idas' bitter disgust is justified. A heroic dream should be achieved by heroic means.

True to form, while his companions seek glory, Jason himself desires only its appearance. Although he speaks of contests and risk, he has been assured by oracles of a safe return (1.301–2, 411–14). Indeed,

---

[9] See Hurst for bibliography (*Manière et cohérence*, 30–31). That the ancients necessarily read aloud has been challenged by Bernard W. Knox, "Silent Reading in Antiquity," *GRBS*, 9 (1968), 421–35. He does, however, concede that to be appreciated, poetry should be read aloud (427–28).

[10] Attributed to Simonides, quoted by Plutarch, *Mor.* 17f, 58b, 346f; see C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry*, Vol. 2: *The "Ars Poetica"* (Cambridge, 1971), 369.

Jason's victory is so degrading that when he finally has the prize in his hands, Apollonius likens him to a girl holding up her dress (4.167–70). The Fleece won through seduction cannot symbolize a reward for heroism. It is just another ornament.

Like the Homeric Penelope, Medea identifies female glory with marriage to a hero (*Od.* 18.251–53). Infatuated with Jason, Medea fails to recognize that a true hero never asks anyone to help him avoid a contest—and certainly not a woman (Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 4.3.26). After Medea has seen Jason for the first time, she dreams that he has crossed the sea to find and marry her. In her own imagination, as the true object of Jason's quest, Medea becomes the Fleece. As the romance sours, she uses the Fleece for a dowry, which she hands Jason in return for escape from Colchis and a promise of marriage (4.87–91). When Jason betrays her to her brother, Medea recognizes that he neither deserves nor values her love. As her dream dissolves, she curses his:

"... δέρος δέ τοι ἶσον ὀνείρῳ
οἴχοιτ' εἰς ἔρεβος μεταμώνιον." (4.384–85)

"... may your Fleece, like an empty dream,
be blown away into Hell."

Seeing no alternative, she uses the Fleece to lure her brother into a trap so Jason can kill him. The Fleece, the deadly trap, *dolos*, with which they ensnare Absyrtus, is the web in which they themselves are also caught. Wanting the Fleece, Jason gets Medea; wanting Jason, Medea gets Jason. Appropriately enough, it is spread out over their wedding couch (4.1141–43). Just before the wedding, we learn that Medea's stay with Jason is only temporary. After she married Jason and been deserted by him, after she has murdered their sons, fled to Athens, tried to murder Theseus, and fled again, she starts a new life. She will then settle down with Achilles in the Elysian Fields (4.811–15). There, she will have an eternity to ponder on what it means to have one's wishes fulfilled.

The Golden Fleece, a relic, shorn from a dead animal, was made of fool's gold; the golden ram is the imperishable gold of poetic immortality. On the cloak, the picture of a speaking ram and a listening Phrixus symbolizes the transmission of ideas from the dead to the living through the written word. The metaphor has particular force because ancient books were often written on sheep skin (Herodotus 5.58.30).[11]

As the disillusioned lovers inside the poem grow to hate each other, so the reader comes to love the poem for its deceptions. Eros, the god

---

[11] Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 19, 235–36.

of desire, embodies the two qualities desirable in a reader: imagination and self-deception. To make Eros shoot Medea with his arrow, Aphrodite bribes him with the promise of Zeus's golden ball (3.132–41). Her promise is based on two dubious propositions: first, that the ball exists and second, that it is in her possession. Since no other author tells the story of Zeus's toy, the reader must assume that Apollonius has made the object up. If the author can make up a story, so can one of his characters—especially a character renowned for her suave deceit. Aphrodite swears to give Eros the toy with an oath that is carefully deceptive. "Let your head and my own bear witness to the fact that I will truly give you a gift and will not deceive you" (3.151–52). The oaths of lovers are deceitful. Even more deceptive is an oath sworn by the goddess of love—especially when she promises not to deceive.[12] Under the solemn wording of her oath, she avoids committing herself. She will give Eros a present if he does her the favor, but that present is not necessarily the toy she has described. Even as he sets out to do her bidding, Eros knows he can never trust his mother. He carefully counts his golden dice before reluctantly handing them over to her care (3.155). He believes true what he wants to be true. Longing for the toy, he deceives himself into thinking she will give it to him. Like the viewer of Jason's cloak, he deceives his own soul.

When Eros descends to earth, he gets a panoramic view of the world in one of Apollonius' more sweeping descriptions. His view parallels the one of a reader looking down on a page when he looks down on a world neatly organized within the margins of the Ocean (3.164–66).[13] The spirit of Eros pierces the page as the god infuses himself into Medea. Under his spell, she combines the roles of lover and reader. As a girl smitten with a young man, she becomes Eros's victim; in her self-deception she is his fellow victim.

Orpheus' audience, the cloak's viewer, the self-deluded Eros—all contribute to our understanding of Medea's mad illusions about Jason. Like the Argonauts and the viewer of the cloak (1.531–15, 765–67), she continues to hear Jason's voice and see his form after he has left the palace (3.453–56). Like Eros, she exercises great powers of self-deception, desiring that which she cannot possibly know. Eros is moved by the beauty of verbal description; she is moved by the beauty of Jason.

Jason is the most sophisticated *objet d'art* in the poem. With his

---

[12] Hunter, suspects that the goddess is lying (*Argonautica Book III*, at 152). While Aphrodite's evasiveness is funny, it foreshadows a grim moment on earth, when Medea evades the oath her sister has asked her to give (3.714–17).

[13] Phinney praises the view from space ("Hellenistic Painting," 148).

flowing hair, beautiful face, and sweet voice, he is the very model of the modern epic man. His brilliance, however, is all surface, as the reader knows by the time Medea appears. Godlike in appearance, he is snubbed by Idas, Heracles, Telamon, Phineus, and Lycus. In the story, only Medea is affected by Jason's beauty, tricked as she is by Love into believing Jason is for real. She then finds herself married not to a hero, but to an image of one. Medea in love is the romantic equivalent of the ideal spectator. The honest artist deceives, while the intelligent critic is deceived (above, p. 23). For this reason, the *Greek Anthology* is filled with poets who insist that paintings and statues are about to walk or talk.[14] The artist Zeuxis is said to have painted grapes so vividly that birds would come out of the sky to eat them.[15] Medea is like the birds who flew at Zeuxis' grapes. Seeing Jason, she imagines him as a glorious hero. The intensity and credibility of Medea's love depend on the reader's artistic skill. Having helped create Jason, we are gratified that Medea believes our statue can walk.

Inside the story, characters are deceived by the oldest trick in the book: belief that another is being fooled. Medea pretends to her maids that she is tricking the Argonauts. They believe her and allow her to meet Jason alone. Pretending to her brother that she will steal the Fleece from Jason, she lures him into an ambush. Like the maids and Absyrtus, the reader is deceived by watching another fooled. When we believe in Medea's deception, we are, like her, merely embracing a fiction.

The narrator helps us believe in her existence because he seems aware of her presence in his own world. Awed by her victory over Talos, he exclaims:

> Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἦ μέγα δή μοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θάμβος ἄηται,
> εἰ δὴ μὴ νούσοισι τυπῇσί τε μοῦνον ὄλεθρος
> ἀντιάει, καὶ δή τις ἀπόπροθεν ἄμμε χαλέπτει . . . .
>
> (4.1673–75)
>
> Father Zeus, indeed great awe blows in my soul,
> if death does not meet us only by diseases and wounds,
> but even someone from afar brings us down . . . .

If someone can be harmed from far away, the narrator is as vulnerable to Medea as Talos was. He has triumphed over his poem by enlisting the aid of a demon, whom he can no longer control and who evidently terrifies him. The reader might also sense her evil eye as she probes the

---

[14] E.g., *A.P.* 9.713–42, all praising Myron's cow.

[15] Pliny, *N.H.* 35.65; Seneca, *Controversiae* 10.5.27. See Shapiro for other examples ("Jason's Cloak," 272–74).

space above the page.

The reader, who has helped create Jason's image, has also helped create Medea. She involves the reader in her struggle and, ultimately, in her decision, with all the sufferings and guilt that result. In being seduced, she seduces the reader. Homer's Nausicaa, who obeyed the mandates of her society, was protected by *aidôs*, as by a glass bubble. We want Medea to break out of that bubble, to be herself, to leave the old road for a new path to selfhood. In sympathizing with her moral struggle and rage, the reader becomes inadvertently committed to a sorceress.

Euripides' Medea invaded the "real" world of the audience in the theater.[16] Leaving a Corinthian roof-top, she lands on an identical one in Athens at the start of the pan-Hellenic war. Like Homer's Odysseus, she seems to plant her feet firmly in two realms. Apollonius' Medea retains that disturbing quality. Describing a journey around the world, Apollonius creates verbal pictures for a literary art-gallery. Medea wanders out of the picture and into the gallery. With eyes fixed on the page, the reader is in danger of meeting the powerful glare of the witch, whose eyes, like the arrows of Odysseus, pierce the boundary separating reality from fiction. For all his differences with Homer, Apollonius shares with him one goal: to pierce our very soul.

---

[16] McDermott, *Euripides' Medea*, 107–11.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adkins, Arthur W. H. *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values*. Oxford, 1960.
Allen, Archibald W. "Sunt qui Propertium Malint." In *Critical Essays on Roman Literature*, Vol. 1: *Elegy and Lyric*. Edited by John P. Sullivan. Cambridge, 1962.
Allen, Walter, Jr. "The Epyllion: A Chapter in the History of Literary Criticism." TAPA, 71 (1940): 1–26.
Arend, Walter. *Die Typischen Scenen bei Homer*. Berlin, 1933.
Beye, Charles R. *Ancient Greek Literature and Society*. 2d ed. rev. Ithaca, 1987.
——. *Apollonius' Argonautica: Epic and Romance*. Carbondale, 1982.
——. *The Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Epic Tradition*. 2d ed. New York, 1966.
——. "Jason as Love-hero in Apollonios' *Argonautika*." GRBS, 10 (1969): 31–55.
Bing, Peter. *The Well-Read Muse: Present and Past in Callimachus and the Hellenistic Poets*. Göttingen, 1988.
Bongie, Elizabeth Bryson. "Heroic Elements in the *Medea* of Euripides." TAPA, 107 (1977): 27–56.
Booth, Wayne. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago, 1961.
Bowra, C. M. *Heroic Poetry*. London, 1952.
Brink, C. O. "Callimachus and Aristotle: An Inquiry into Callimachus' ΠΡΟΣ ΠΡΑΞΙΦΑΝΗΝ." CQ, 40 (1946): 11–26.
——. *Horace on Poetry*. Vol. 1: *Prolegomena to the Literary Epistles*. Cambridge, 1963. Vol. 2: *The "Ars Poetica."* Cambridge, 1971.
Bulloch, A. W. "Callimachus' *Erysichthon*, Homer, and Apollonius Rhodius." AJP, 98 (1977): 97–23.
——. "Hellenistic Poetry." In *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, Vol. 1, Part 4: *The Hellenistic Period and the Empire*. Edited by P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox. Cambridge, 1985.
Bundy, Elroy. "The Quarrel between Kallimachos and Apollonios, Part I: The Epilogue of Kallimachos's *Hymn to Apollo*." *California Studies in Classical Antiquity*, 5 (1972): 39–94.
Burkert, Walter. *Greek Religion*. Translated by John Raffan. Cambridge, 1985.
Cairns, Douglas L. *Aidos: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature*. Oxford, 1993.
Campbell, Malcolm. "Apollonian and Homeric Book Division." *Mnemosyne*, 36 (1983): 154–56.
——. *Echoes and Imitations of Early Epic in Apollonius Rhodius*. Leiden, 1981.
——. *Studies in the Third Book of Apollonius Rhodius' Argonautica*. New York, 1983.
——. "Theocritus Thirteen." In *Owls to Athens: Essays on Classical Subjects Presented to Sir Kenneth Dover*, ed. E. M. Clark, 113–19. Oxford, 1990.
——. "Three Notes on Alexandrine Poetry." *Hermes*, 102 (1974): 38–46.
——, editor. *Index Verborum in Apollonium Rhodium*. New York, 1983.
Carspecken, John F. "Apollonius Rhodius and the Homeric Epic." YCS, 13 (1952): 33–143.
Clapp, E. B. "Two Pindaric Poems of Theocritus." CP, 8 (1913): 310–16.
Clarke, W. M. "Achilles and Patroclus in Love." *Hermes*, 106 (1978): 381–96.
Clauss, James. J. *The Best of the Argonauts: The Redefinition of the Epic Hero in Book 1 of Apollonius's Argonautica*. Berkeley, 1993.
Clayman, Dee Lesser. "Callimachus' *Iambi* and *Aitia*." ZPE, 74 (1988): 277–86.
Collard, C. "Medea and Dido." *Prometheus*, 1 (1975): 131–51.
Collins, John F. "Studies in Book One of the *Argonautica* of Apollonius Rhodius." Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia, 1967.
Day, Archibald A. *The Origins of Latin Love-Elegy*. Oxford, 1938.
Deubner, L. "Ein Stilprinzip hellenistischer Dichtkunst." NJA, 47 (1921): 361–78.
Dodds, E. R. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. 2nd edition. Berkeley, 1951.
Dover, K. J. *Greek Homosexuality*. New York, 1978.

——. *Theocritus: Select Poems*. London, 1971.
Duckworth, George. *Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Epics of Homer, Apollonius, and Vergil.* Princeton, 1933.
Eichgrün, Egon. "Kallimachos und Apollonios Rhodios." Ph.D. dissertation, Berlin, 1961.
Elderkin, G. W. "Repetition in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius." *AJP*, 34 (1913): 198–201.
Erbse, Hartmut. "Homerscholien und hellenistische Glossare bei Apollonios Rhodios." *Hermes*, 81 (1953): 163–96.
——, editor. *Scholia Graeca in Homeri Iliadem (Scholia Vetera)*. 5 vols. Berlin, 1969–1977.
Feeney, D. C. *The Gods in Epic: Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition*. Oxford, 1991.
Fowler, Barbara Hughes. *The Hellenistic Aesthetic*. Madison, 1989.
Fränkel, Hermann. "Apollonius Rhodius as a Narrator in *Argonautika* 2.1–140." *TAPA*, 83 (1952): 144–55.
——. *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy: A History of Greek Epic, Lyric, and Prose to the Middle of the Fifth Century*. Translated by Moses Hadas and James Willis. Oxford, 1975.
——. "Ein Don Quijote unter den Argonauten des Apollonios." *MH*, 17 (1960): 1–20.
——. *Noten zu den Argonautika des Apollonios*. Munich, 1968.
——, editor. *Apollonii Rhodii Argonautica*. 1961; rev. rpt., Oxford, 1964.
Fraser, P. M. *Ptolemaic Alexandria*. 3 vols. Oxford, 1972.
Fuchs, Hermann. "Die Hylasgeschichte bei Apollonios Rhodios und Theokrit." Ph.D. dissertation, Würzburg, 1969.
Fusillo, Massimo. *Il Tempo delle Argonautiche: Un Analisi del racconto in Apollonio Rodio*. Rome, 1985.
George, Edward V. "Poet and Characters in Apollonius Rhodius' Lemnian Episode." *Hermes*, 100 (1972): 47–63.
Giangrande, G. "The Utilization of Homeric Variants by Apollonius Rhodius: A Methodological Canon of Research." *QUUC*, 15 (1973): 73–81.
——. *Zu Sprachgebrauch, Technik und Text des Apollonios Rhodios*. Classical and Byzantine Monographs. Amsterdam, 1973.
Goldhill, Simon. *The Poet's Voice: Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature*. Cambridge, 1991.
Gow, A. S. F., editor. *Bucolici Graeci*. Oxford, 1952.
——, editor. *Theocritus*. 2 vols. Cambridge, 1950.
——and Denys L. Page, editors. *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*. 2 vols. Cambridge, 1965.
Griffin, Jasper. "The Divine Audience and the Religion of the *Iliad*." *CQ*, 28 (1978): 1–22.
Hadas, Moses. *Ancilla to Classical Reading*. New York, 1954.
——, "Apollonius Called the Rhodian." *CW*, 26 (1932): 41–46, 49–54.
Händel, P. *Beobachtungen zur epischen Technik des Apollonios Rhodios*. Zetemata, 7. Munich, 1954.
——. "Die zwei Versionen der Viten des Apollonios Rhodios." *Hermes*, 90 (1962): 429–43.
Haslam, M. W. "Apollonius Rhodius and the Papyri." *ICS*, 3 (1978): 47–73.
Havelock, Eric. *The Muse Learns to Write: Reflections on Orality and Literacy from Antiquity to the Present*. New Haven, 1986.
——. *Preface to Plato*. Cambridge, 1963.
Herington, C. J. *Poetry into Drama. Early Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition*. Berkeley, 1985.
Herter, Hans. "Apollonios der Epiker." *RE* Supp. 13 (1973): 15–56.
——. "Bericht über die Literatur zur hellenistischen Dichtung aus den Jahren 1921–1935." Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, 255 (1937): 65–217.
——. "Bericht über die Literatur zur hellenistischen Dichtung seit dem Jahre 1921, 2: Apollonios von Rhodos." Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, 285 (1944/1955): 213–410.
——. "Kallimachos aus Kyrene." *RE* Supp. 13 (1973): 184–266.

———. "Telchinen." *RE*, Ser 2, vol. 9 (1934): 197–224.

———. "Zur Lebensgeschichte des Apollonios von Rhodos." *RM*, 91 (1942): 310–26.

Hollis, A. S. "The Composition of Callimachus' *Aetia* in the Light of P.OXY 2258." *CQ*, 36 (1986): 467–71.

———, editor. *Callimachus: Hecale*. Oxford, 1990.

Hunter, Richard L. "Apollo and the Argonauts: Two Notes on Ap. Rhod. 2.669–719." *MH*, 43 (1986): 50–60.

———. *The Argonautica of Apollonius: Literary Studies*. Cambridge, 1993.

———. "Medea's Flight: The Fourth Book of the *Argonautica*." *CQ*, 37 (1987): 129–39.

———. "'Short on Heroics': Jason in the *Argonautica*." *CQ*, 38 (1989), 436–53.

———, editor. *Apollonius of Rhodes: Argonautica Book III*. Cambridge, 1989.

Hurst, André. *Apollonios de Rhodes: manière et cohérence*. Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana, 8. Geneva, 1967.

Hutchinson, G. O. *Hellenistic Poetry*. Oxford, 1988.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*. London, 1974.

Kambylis, Athanasios. *Die Dichterweihe und ihre Symbolik: Untersuchungen zu Hesiodos, Kallimachos, Properz und Ennius*. Heidelberg, 1965.

King, Joy K. "Propertius 2.1–12: His Callimachean Second *Libellus*." *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft*, N.F. 6 (1980): 61–84.

———. "Propertius' Programmatic Poetry and the Unity of the *Monobiblos*." *CJ*, 71 (1975): 108–24.

Klein, Theodore M. "Apollonius' Jason: Hero and Scoundrel." *QUCC*, 13 (1983): 115–26.

———. "Apollonius Rhodius, *Vates Ludens*: Eros' Golden Ball (*Arg*. 3.113–150)." *CW*, 74 (1981): 225–27.

———. "Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius, and the Concept of the Big Book." *Eranos*, 73 (1975): 16–25.

———. "The Role of Callimachus in the Development of the Concept of the Counter-Genre." *Latomus*, 33 (1974): 217–31.

Knox, Bernard W. "The *Medea* of Euripides." *YCS*, 25 (1977): 193–225.

———. "Silent Reading in Antiquity." *GRBS*, 9 (1968): 421–35.

Knaack, G. "Zu den *Aitien* des Kallimachos." *Hermes*, 23 (1888): 131–41.

Knight, Virginia. Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.167–70 and Euripides' *Medea*." *CQ*, 41 (1991): 248–50.

Knox, Peter E. "The Epilogue to the *Aetia*." *GRBS*, 26 (1985): 59–65.

———. "Wine, Water, and Callimachean Polemics," *HSCP*, 89 (1985), 107–19.

Köhnken, A. *Apollonios und Theokrit: Die Hylas- und die Amykosgeschichten beider Dichter und die Frage der Priorität*. Hypomnemata 12. Göttingen, 1965.

Lawall, Gilbert. "Apollonius' *Argonautica*: Jason as Anti-Hero." *YCS*, 19 (1966): 119–69.

Lefkowitz, Mary. *The Lives of the Greek Poets*. Baltimore, 1981.

———. "The Quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius." *ZPE*, 40 (1980): 1–19.

Lesky, Albin. *A History of Greek Literature*. Translated from 2nd German edition by James Willis and Cornelis de Heer. New York, 1966.

Levin, Donald N. *Apollonius' Argonautica Re-Examined*. Vol. 1: *The Neglected First and Second Books*. Mnemosyne Supp. 13. Leiden, 1971.

———. "Apollonius' Heracles." *CJ*, 67 (1971): 22–28.

Livrea, Enrico, editor. *Apolloni Rhodi. Argonauticon Liber Quartus*. Florence, 1973.

Lloyd-Jones, H. and P. J. Parsons, editors. *Supplementum Hellenisticum*. Berlin, 1983.

Lonie, I. M. "Propertius and the Alexandrians." *AUMLA*, 11 (1959): 17–34.

Luce, J. V. *Homer and the Heroic Age*. New York, 1975.

Ludwig, Walther. "Die Kunst der Variation im hellenistischen Liebesepigramm." In *L'Epigramme Grecque*. Fondation Hardt pour l'Etude de l'Antiquité Classique, Vol. 14. Geneva, 1967.

MacGready, F. "Heracles' Love for Hylas." *Corolla Londiniensis*, 3 (1983): 79–80.

McDermott, Emily A. *Euripides' Medea: The Incarnation of Disorder*. London, 1981.

McKay, K. J. "Mischief in Kallimachos' Hymn to Artemis." *Mnemosyne*, 16 (1963): 243–56.
McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. London, 1964.
Marco, V. de. "Osservazioni su Apollonio Rodio I 1–22." *Miscellanea di studi alessandrini in memoria di A. Rostagni*. Turin, 1963, 350–55.
Maryon, H. "The Colossus of Rhodes." *JHS*, 76 (1956): 68–86.
Meillier, Claude. *Callimaque et son temps. Recherches sur la carrière d'un écrivain à l'époque des premiers Lagides*. Publications de l'université de Lille, 3. Lille, 1979.
Mooney, George W., editor. *The Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius*. Dublin, 1912.
Muecke, F. "Playing with the Play: Theatrical Self-Consciousness in Aristophanes." *Antichthon*, 11 (1977): 52–67.
——. "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman." CQ, 32 (1982): 41–55
Murray, Gilbert. "Heracles, 'The Best of Men.'" In *Greek Studies*. Oxford, 1946.
Nagy, Gregory. *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*. Baltimore, 1979.
Newman, John Kevin. *The Classical Epic Tradition*. Madison, 1986.
Ong, Walter J. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. London, 1982.
Onians, John. *Art and Thought in the Hellenistic Age: The Greek World View 350–50* BC. London, 1979.
Otis, Brooks. *Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry*. Oxford, 1964.
Paduano, Guido. *Studi su Apollonio Rodio*. Rome, 1972.
——, and Massimo Fusillo, editors and translators. *Le Argonautiche*. Milan, 1986.
Page, Denys L. *History and the Homeric Iliad*. Berkeley, 1959.
——. *The Homeric Odyssey*, Oxford, 1955.
Palombi, Maria Grazia. "Eracle e Ila nelle *Argonautiche* di Apollonio Rodio." *Studi Classici et Orientali*, 80 (1985): 71–92.
Parsons, P. J. "Callimachus: Victoria Berenices." *ZPE*, 25 (1977): 1–50.
Paskiewicz, T. M. "*Aetia* in the Second Book of Apollonius' *Argonautica*." *ICS*, 13 (1988): 57–61.
Pavlock, Barbara. *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition*. Ithaca, 1990.
Pfeiffer, Rudolph, editor. *Callimachus*. 2 vols. Oxford, 1949–1953.
——. *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginning to the End of the Hellenistic Age*. Oxford, 1968.
Phinney, Jr., E. S. "Hellenistic Painting and the Poetic Style of Apollonius," *CJ*, 62 (1967), 145–49.
Pollitt, J. J. *Art in the Hellenistic Age*. Cambridge, 1986.
Pulbrook, M. "The Hylas Myth in Apollonius of Rhodes and Theocritus." *Maynooth Review*, 8 (1983): 25–31.
Reckford, Kenneth. *Aristophanes' Old-and-New Comedy*. Chapel Hill, 1987.
Reinisch-Werner, Hannelore. *Callimachus Hesiodicus: Die Rezeption des hesiodischen Dichtung durch Kallimachos von Kyrene*. Berlin, 1976.
Rieu, E. V., translator. *The Voyage of the Argo*. Baltimore, 1959.
Rose, Amy R. "Clothing Imagery in Apollonius's *Argonautika*." *QUCC*, 50 (1985): 26–44.
——. "Three Narrative Themes in Apollonios' Bebrykian Episode (*Argonautika* 2, 1–163)." *WS*, 18 (1984): 115–35.
Schlunk, R. R. *The Homeric Scholia and the Aeneid. A Study of the Influence of Ancient Homeric Literary Criticism on Virgil*. Ann Arbor, 1974.
Scholes, Robert, and Robert Kellogg. *The Nature of Narrative*. Oxford, 1966.
Segal, Charles. "Greek Tragedy: Writing, Truth, and the Representation of the Self." In *Mnemai: Classical Studies in Memory of Karl K. Hulley*, edited by Harold D. Evjen, 41–67. Chico, 1984.
——. "The Menace of Dionysus: Sex Roles and Reversals in Euripides' Bacchae." *Arethusa*, 11, (1978): 185–202.
——. "'Since Daphnis Dies': The Meaning of Theocritus' First *Idyll*." MH, 31 (1974):1–22.
——. "The Song of Iopas in the *Aeneid*." *Hermes*, 99 (1971): 336–49.
——. "Vergil's Sixth Eclogue and the Problem of Evil." TAPA, 100 (1969): 407–35.

Shapiro, A. H. "Jason's Cloak." TAPA, 110 (1980): 263–86.
Smiley, M. T. "Callimachus' Debt to Pindar and Others." *Hermathena*, 40 (1919): 46–72.
Stanford, W. B. *The Ulysses Theme*. Oxford, 1964.
Stoessl, Franz. *Apollonios Rhodios: Interpretationen zur Erzählungskunst und Quellenverwertung*. Bern, 1941.
Suerbaum, Werner. "Die Ich-erzählungen des Odysseus: Überlegungen zur epischen Technik der Odyssee." *Poetica*, 2 (1968): 150–77.
Tarán, Sonya Lida. *The Art of Variation in the Hellenistic Epigram*. Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition, Vol. 9. Leiden, 1979.
Thomas, Richard F. "New Comedy, Callimachus, and Roman Poetry." HSCP, 83 (1979): 179–206.
Valk, Marchinus van der. *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad*. 2 vols. Leiden, 1963–64.
——. *Textual Criticism of the Odyssey*. Leiden, 1949.
Van Sickle, John. "The Book-Roll and Some Conventions of the Poetic Book." *Arethusa*, 13 (1980): 5–42.
Vian, Francis, editor. *Apollonios de Rhodes*. *Argonautiques I: Chants I–II*. Coll. G. Budé. Paris, 1974.
——, editor. *Apollonios de Rhodes*. *Argonautiques I: Chant III*. 2d ed. Paris, 1980.
——, editor. *Apollonios de Rhodes*. *Argonautiques III: Chant IV*. Paris, 1981.
Webster, T. B. L. "Chronological Problems in Early Alexandrian Poetry, WS, 76 (1963): 68–78.
——. *Hellenistic Poetry and Art*. New York, 1964.
Wendel, Carl, editor. *Scholia in Apollonium Vetera*. Berlin, 1935.
White, Heather. *Studies in Theocritus and other Hellenistic Poets*. Amsterdam, 1979.
Whitman, Cedric H. *Homer and the Heroic Tradition*. Cambridge, 1958.
Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, Ulrich von. *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos*, 2 vols. Dublin, 1924.
——. *Die Textgeschichte der griechischen Bukoliker*. Berlin, 1906.
Williams, F., editor. *Callimachus: Hymn to Apollo*. Oxford, 1978.
——. "A Theophany in Theocritus." CQ, 65, (1971): 137–45.
Wimmel, Walter. *Kallimachos in Rom: Die Nachfolge seines apologetischen Dichtens in der Augusteerzeit*. Hermes Einzelschriften, 16. Wiesbaden, 1960.
Zanker, G. "The Love Theme in Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica*." WS, 92 (1979): 52–75.
——. "Callimachus' *Hecale*: A New Kind of Epic Hero?" *Antichthon* 11 (1977): 68–77.
——. *Realism in Alexandrian Poetry*. London, 1987.
Zeitlin, Froma I. "The Dynamics of Misogyny in the *Oresteia*." *Arethusa*, 11 (1978): 149–84.
Ziegler, Konrat. *Das Hellenistische Epos, ein vergessenes Kapitel griechischer Dichtung*. Leipzig, 1934.

INDEX

Absyrtus, 97, 100, 103, 128–30, 136
Acastus, 49
Achilles, 25–26, 31, 39, 53, 136; and Briseis, 65; and Hector, 108, 112, 117, 118, 121; and Patroclus, 25, 62–65, 116; as absent hero, 73, 109; as best of the Greeks, 51, 65, 73; as central hero, 48; embassy to, 118–20; shield of, *see under* Art. *See also under* Heracles; Jason; Medea
Aeetes, 48, 100, 102, 103, 105–6, 109–10, 115, 121, 129, 144, 146, 148
Aeneas, 66, 136
Aeschylus, 17, 55, 63; in Aristophanes, 26, 35
Aethalides, 86, 90, 92
Agamemnon, 26, 49, 50, 53. *See also under* Jason
Aidos, 107, 110–13, 116, 117, 125, 152. *See also under* Love
Ajax, 39, 67
Alcinous, 79, 82, 84, 85, 131, 136, 144. *See also* Phaeacians
Alexandrian Library, 15, 21, 28, 40n, 95
Alexandrian scholars, 21, 32–34, 43, 63–64, 116, 132
Amycus, 12, 30, 72–74, 83, 115, 138
Andromache, 116–17, 129–30
Antimachus of Colophon, 3n, 45
Aphrodite, 88n, 107, 125, 145, 150
Apollo: in *Argonautica*, 37, 39–44, 48–49, 51–52, 53–54, 79, 80–82, 85, 137; in Callimachus, 27–28, 30, 39, 51–52; in Roman poetry, 39n
Apollonius: life of, 1–3, 11, 14–16; and Roman poets, 16n, 34–36, 64n, 124n; and Theocritus, 12–13, 72. *See also* Callimachean narrator
Appearance and reality, 48, 53–54, 80, 82, 114, 115–17, 118, 122, 131
Arete, 130–31
Argo, 146–47. *See also under* Metaphors for poetry: boat
Argonautica: *aitia* in 8, 100; as *aition*, 142; as book, 70–71, 78–79, 149; catalogue of heroes in, 40–41, 49–51, 83; disparagement within, 73–74, 82–85, 86–87, 101–2, 113–14; echoes of Callimachus in, 14n, 15n, 40, 51–52, 75, 81, 119, 123–24, 135, 137; echoes of Homer in, 37–40, 65, 82–83, 93, 96, 117, 118, 121, 129–30, 132, 136; invocations in, 37–41, 71–72, 100, 126; powerful females in, 65, 68, 79, 108–9; scale of, 44, 47, 61–62, 64; structure of, 99–101, 140, 144–46; and Homeric epic, 44, 48, 93–98
Argonauts: passivity of, 102, 113–14, 148. *See also* under Heracles; Jason.
Argus (Argonaut), 49
Argus (Medea's nephew), 109–10, 113, 115, 117, 120; and brothers, 102, 103–6, 109, 116
Ariadne, 121–22, 130
Aristophanes, 5, 55; *Frogs*, 24, 26, 35, 48
Aristotle, 16, 98, 108; *Nicomachean Ethics*, 9–10, 128n
Art: Cloak of Jason, 56–57, 64, 92–93, 95–97, 143, 144–48; Shield of Achilles, 56, 93–98; Song of Orpheus, 92–95, 133, 143; (pictorial): and words, 97, 146–47
Artemis, 30–32, 49, 65, 75
Asclepiades, 3n
Athena, 4, 57, 79, 109, 125
Author vs. narrator, 6–7. *See also* Callimachean narrator vs. Apollonius
Book, 18–20, 70–71, 79, 152
Boreads, 54, 67, 69, 75, 78
Breaking off of narrative: in Homer, 58–59; in *Argonautica*, 75–76, 86, 122, 138, 142
Callimachean narrator of *Argonautica*: control of plot by, 68, 74–78, 113–14, 119–21, 133; and love interest, 17, 34–35, 74–75, 78, 113, 119–20; malice of, 48–51, 53, 64, 77–78, 102; and Medea, 123–24, 126–27, 151; scholarly concerns of, 8, 39, 40, 43, 76; victory of, 64, 68, 113–14, 132–42, 146; voice of, 16–17; vs. Apollonius, 7, 17, 34, 41, 43–44, 46, 90, 91–92, 133, 143. *See also under* Phineus
Callimachus: and Aristophanic Euripides, 26, 35; and Homer, 2, 25–34; and Roman poets 34–36, 39n; enemies of, 2–3, 16, 29, 26–28, 32–34, 45, 133; literary vocabulary of, 26, 27, 29, 86, 87, 122, 135, 141; as scholar, 28, 43, 32–34; *Aitia*-Prologue, 26–27, 29–30, 40, 123–24; *Hecale*, 29, 32; *Hymn to Apollo*, 27–28, 44, 80–81, 119, 135; *Hymn to Artemis*, 30–32. *See also under* Apollo; *Recusatio*

Chalciope, 102, 103, 105n, 109, 112, 114–18
Circe, 39, 58, 97–98, 100, 103, 130, 135, 136
Colossus of Rhodes, 29–30, 136
Concrete poetry, 20–21
Continuity: and Homeric narrative, 28, 86–88; and pseudo-Homeric behavior, 101–6; and Callimachean narrative, 133–34; of plot, 98–101. *See also* Discontinuity
Costume, 47–48, 64, 135
Cronus, 95, 144
Cyclops, 60, 64n, 104, 144n, 147
Cyzicus, 54, 60–61, 77–78, 100n
Demodocus, 23, 39
Dionysus, 48, 130
Discontinuity: and Apollonius' narrative, 92–98; of plot, 98–101, 134. *See also* Breaking off of narrative; Continuity
Empedocles, 93, 94, 143n
Eros, 109, 149–50
Erysichthon, 75
Euphemus: as Callimachus' ancestor, 78–79, 139–42
Euripides: 91; in Aristophanes, 5, 26, 35; *Medea*, 1n, 48, 90, 112, 128, 138–39, 152
Evil eye, 27n, 119, 137
Ganymede, 147
Garden of the Hesperides, 134–35
Gegenes, 60, 62, 77, 138
Glaucus, 67, 68, 78
Golden Fleece: as deception, 130, 139, 148–49
Harmodius and Aristogeiton, 62
Hector, 5n, 73, 96, 113, 116, 117, 130. *See also under* Achilles; Medea
Helen, 5n, 88n
Hephaestus, 93
Hera, 94–95, 103, 107–8, 109, 115, 119, 125 hatred of for Heracles, 60, 66; love of for Jason, 66
Heracles, 47–69, 103, 139, 143, 144, 145, 147; and Achilles, 51, 61–65, 73; and Amycus, 72; and Argonauts, 50, 58–61, 64, 67, 70, 73, 135; and Odysseus, 53; and Odysseus' crew, 58; and Thersites, 58–59; as absent hero, 65, 73, 80, 84–85, 101–2, 107, 109; as best of Argonauts, 50, 65, 73–74; as Callimachean hero, 135; as central hero of *Argonautica*, 50–51; as narrator, 53; as representing epic values, 58, 84–85, 135, 139; authority of, 51, 58–59; competitiveness of, 60–62; dangerousness of, 61–62, 64; labors of, 53, 66–68, 114, 135; pederasty of, 62–65; removal of from poem, 68, 74–75, 95; in art, 47; in Callimachus, 30–32, 62; in Theocritus, 74; in tradition, 30n, 51n. *See also under* Jason; Medea
Herodotus, 19
Hesiod, 2, 21, 31, 32, 95, 131
Hippodamia, 146
Homer: ancient criticism of, 28–29, 50n, 64, 77–78, 86–90, 119–20, 132; audience of (external), 21–24; audience of (internal), 23–24, 59, 79–85, 102, 152; catalogue in, 50; division of into books, 70–71; poetic features of 8, 87; as performer, 21–24. See also under *Argonautica*; Callimachus
Homeric Hymns, 37–39
Hylas, 12, 72; and Briseis, 65; and Patroclus, 65; rape of, 65
Hypsipyle, 54, 56–57, 87–92. *See also* Lemnian Women
Idas, 53, 54; as representing epic values, 113–14, 123, 148
Idmon, 44, 54
Inner life, 84, 91–92, 110n, 111–12, 115, 129
Iphinoe, 87–88
Jason, *passim*; and Achilles, 56, 121; and Agamemnon, 49, 50, 51, 58–59, 80; and Argonauts, 49–50, 53, 54, 67, 82; and Heracles, 47–69, 135; and Odysseus, 52–53, 58, 60, 82–84, 121; and Polydeuces, 72–73; as Callimachean hero, 51–52; as central hero, 54; as love-hero, 56–57, 121–23; as naïve reader, 57, 89–90, 97; as narrator, 82–84, 105, 121–22; as "whoever," 60, 135; beautiful surface of, 48–49, 59–60, 110, 122, 148–49, 150–51; hypocrisy of, 103–6, 121–22, 128–30; labor of, 56, 67, 113–14, 122–23; modern defense of, 44n, 47n; timidity of 44, 128–30; in tradition, 1, 8. *See also under* Medea
Lemnian women, 55–57, 90–91, 98. *See also* Hypsipyle
Literary criticism (pre-Alexandrian), 26
Longinus, 30, 44
Love: vs. *aidos*, 110–12, 125; and anti-epic, 107–9, 121; as deception, 122, 149–51
Lycus, 79, 83–85, 100, 145
Lyre, 16–17
Medea, 39, 97, 100, 103, 106, 107–152; and Achilles, 118–20, 126; and Hector, 110–12, 118, 121; and Heracles 107, 112, 123; and Nausicaa, 110, 111, 113, 118, 123, 128, 152; and Odysseus, 126–27; as Callimachean heroine, 123–24, 136–39; as central hero of *Argonautica*, 107, 123; as spec-

tator, 109–10, 149–52; dangerousness of, 114–18, 126–30, 131, 136–39, 151–52; future infanticide of, 66, 90, 131, 138; future marriage of to Achilles, 136, 149
Metaphor for poet: child, 119
Metaphors for poetic faults: gluttony, 30–31; sin, 29–30, 75
Metaphors for poetry: art, 29–30, 96–98; boat, 61–62, 79, 98–99, 138, 143–48; garden, 134–35; path, 45, 68, 84–85, 123–24; toy, 119n, 143–44; universe, 93–95; water, 27, 44—45, 135–36; weaving, 96–97
Mopsus, 44, 113, 120
Muses, 19, 21, 30, 40, 95, 100
Museum. *See* Alexandrian Library
Nausicaa. *See under* Medea
Nereids, 109
Odysseus, 22–24, 39, 60, 104, 132, 152; as absent hero, 109; as best of the Greeks, 51; as central hero, 48; as narrator, 52, 59, 83–84, 102. *See also under* Heracles; Jason; Medea
Oenomaus, 146
Orpheus, 53, 81. *See also* Art: Song of Orpheus
Paris, 48
Patroclus, 108. *See also under* Achilles
Pelias, 37, 44, 50, 105, 109
Pelops, 146
Penelope, 23, 103, 132, 149
Phaeacians, 23, 24, 39, 59, 102, 130
Phaëthon, 130n
Phineus, 99, 144, 145; and Callimachean narrator, 74–78, 86, 102, 103, 104, 106, 113, 119, 120, 122; vs. Heracles, 74
Phrixus, 102, 146; sons of. *See* Argus (Medea's nephew) and brothers
Pindar, 24, 39, 135; *Pythian* 4, 1n, 42, 105, 122, 139, 140
Planctae. *See under Symplegades*
Plato, 6, 16–17, 28n
Polydeuces, 12, 54, 72–73, 83, 138, 144
Poseidippus, 3n
Poseidon, 82, 88
Prodicus, 68
Prometheus, 106, 126
Reader: as co-author, 83–84, 92, 138–39, 141–42, 144, 147; like lover, 149–50; reflections of in text, 79–85, 109–10, 147, 150; self-deception of 146–52
Reading: process of, 97
Recusatio (refusal to write epic): *Argonautica* as, 8–9, 17, 44–46, 48, 60, 65–66, 68, 74–75, 113–14; in Callimachus, 2, 26–32; in Rome, 34–36
Reversal of gender roles, 55–57, 65, 101, 107–9, 112, 127–28, 136–37
Roman poets, 16n, 34–36, 39n, 64n, 124n
Sappho, 134
Sexual imagery: Fleece, 130–31; gates, 57; plowing, 56, 92, 140–41
Sophocles, 16, 55
Suitors of Penelope, 23, 24, 48, 53, 87n
Surface and reality, 8–9, 53–54, 114, 115–16, 118, 131
Symplegades: test of poem, 78–80, 140; and Planctae, 78, 99, 101, 109, 144, 145
Talos, 30, 125, 136–38, 146, 151
Telamon, 54, 67, 70, 72
Telchines, 26–30
Telemachus, 4, 103
Temporal paradoxes, 44–45, 46, 133, 139, 141
Theiodamas, 31, 32, 65
Theocritus, 24–25, 28, 30. *See also under* Apollonius
Thersites, 58–59
Theseus, 32, 50n, 121, 122, 149
Thucydides, 19–20, 38n, 39
Timon of Phlius, 1
Tiphys, 80
Tiresias, 75
Tityus, 146
Triton, 139, 140
Troy, 96
Union of opposites, 133–37
Unreliable narrators, 83–84, 91–92
Verbal repetition, 41–42, 66, 74n, 75–76, 87–88, 89–90, 129, 130
Vergil, 66
Words and reality, 5–6, 19–20, 42, 44, 70–72, 82, 83, 92, 133
Worlds of narrative: joined, 21–24, 37, 41–42, 81–82, 93–94, 133–34, 146, 151–52; sundered, 42, 43, 70–74, 83, 84; image for, 94–95, 133–34
Zethus, 144
Zeus, 88, 94–95, 104–5, 143; plan of, 68, 108–9
Zeuxis, 151

SUPPLEMENTS TO MNEMOSYNE

EDITED BY J. M. BREMER, L. F. JANSSEN, H. PINKSTER, H. W. PLEKET, C. J. RUIJGH AND P. H. SCHRIJVERS

4. LEEMAN, A.D. *A Systematical Bibliography of Sallust (1879-1964)*. Revised and augmented edition. 1965. ISBN 90 04 01467 5
5. LENZ, F.W. (ed.). *The Aristeides 'Prolegomena'*. 1959. ISBN 90 04 01468 3
7. McKAY, K.J. *Erysichthon. A Callimachean Comedy*. 1962. ISBN 90 04 01470 5
11. RUTILIUS LUPUS. *De Figuris Sententiarum et Elocutionis*. Edited with Prolegomena and Commentary by E. Brooks. 1970. ISBN 90 04 01474 8
12. SMYTH, W.R. (ed.). *Thesaurus criticus ad Sexti Propertii textum*. 1970. ISBN 90 04 01475 6
13. LEVIN, D.N. *Apollonius' 'Argonautica' re-examined*. 1. The Neglected First and Second Books. 1971. ISBN 90 04 02575 8
14. REINMUTH, O.W. *The Ephebic Inscriptions of the Fourth Century B.C.* 1971. ISBN 90 04 01476 4
16. ROSE, K.F.C. *The Date and Author of the 'Satyricon'*. With an Introduction by J.P. Sullivan. 1971. ISBN 90 04 02578 2
18. WILLIS, J. *De Martiano Capella emendando*. 1971. ISBN 90 04 02580 4
19. HERINGTON, C.J. (ed.). *The Older Scholia on the Prometheus Bound*. 1972. ISBN 90 04 03455 2
20. THIEL, H. VAN. *Petron. Überlieferung und Rekonstruktion*. 1971. ISBN 90 04 02581 2
21. LOSADA, L.A. *The Fifth Column in the Peloponnesian War*. 1972. ISBN 90 04 03421 8
23. BROWN, V. *The Textual Transmission of Caesar's 'Civil War'*. 1972. ISBN 90 04 03457 9
24. LOOMIS, J.W. *Studies in Catullan Verse*. An Analysis of Word Types and Patterns in the Polymetra. 1972. ISBN 90 04 03429 3
27. GEORGE, E.V. *Aeneid VIII and the Aitia of Callimachus*. 1974. ISBN 90 04 03859 0
29. BERS, V. *Enallage and Greek Style*. 1974. ISBN 90 04 03786 1
37. SMITH, O.L. *Studies in the Scholia on Aeschylus. 1. The Recensions of Demetrius Triclinius*. 1975. ISBN 90 04 04220 2
39. SCHMELING, G.L. & J.H. STUCKEY. *A Bibliography of Petronius*. 1977 ISBN 90 04 04753 0
44. THOMPSON, W.E. *De Hagniae Hereditate. An Athenian Inheritance Case*. 1976. ISBN 90 04 04757 3
45. McGUSHIN, P. *Sallustius Crispus, 'Bellum Catilinae'. A Commentary*. 1977. ISBN 90 04 04835 9
46. THORNTON, A. *The Living Universe. Gods and Men in Virgil's Aeneid*. 1976. ISBN 90 04 04579 1
48. BRENK, F.E. *In Mist apparelled. Religious Themes in Plutarch's 'Moralia' and 'Lives'*. 1977. ISBN 90 04 05241 0
51. SUSSMAN, L.A. *The Elder Seneca*. 1978. ISBN 90 04 05759 5
57. BOER, W. DEN. *Private Morality in Greece and Rome*. Some Historical Aspects. 1979. ISBN 90 04 05976 8
61. *Hieronymus' Liber de optimo genere interpretandi (Epistula 57)*. Ein Kommentar von G.J.M. Bartelink. 1980. ISBN 90 04 06085 5
63. HOHENDAHL-ZOETELIEF, I.M. *Manners in the Homeric Epic*. 1980. ISBN 90 04 06223 8
64. HARVEY, R.A. *A Commentary on Persius*. 1981. ISBN 90 04 06313 7
65. MAXWELL-STUART, P.G. *Studies in Greek Colour Terminology*. 1. γλαυκός. 1981. ISBN 90 04 06406 0
68. ACHARD, G. *Pratique rhétorique et idéologie politique dans les discours 'Optimates' de Cicéron*. 1981. ISBN 90 04 06374 9
69. MANNING, C.E. *On Seneca's 'Ad Marciam'*. 1981. ISBN 90 04 06430 3

70. BERTHIAUME, G. *Les rôles du Mágeiros.* Etude sur la boucherie, la cuisine et le sacrifice dans la Grèce ancienne. 1982. ISBN 90 04 06554 7
71. CAMPBELL, M. *A commentary on Quintus Smyrnaeus Posthomerica XII.* 1981. ISBN 90 04 06502 4
72. CAMPBELL, M. *Echoes and Imitations of Early Epic in Apollonius Rhodius.* 1981. ISBN 90 04 06503 2
73. MOSKALEW, W. *Formular Language and Poetic Design in the Aeneid.* 1982. ISBN 90 04 06580 6
74. RACE, W.H. *The Classical Priamel from Homer to Boethius.* 1982. ISBN 90 04 06515 6
75. MOORHOUSE, A.C. *The Syntax of Sophocles.* 1982. ISBN 90 04 06599 7
77. WITKE, C. *Horace's Roman Odes.* A Critical Examination. 1983. ISBN 90 04 07006 0
78. ORANJE, J. *Euripides' 'Bacchae'.* The Play and its Audience. 1984. ISBN 90 04 07011 7
79. STATIUS. *Thebaidos Libri XII.* Recensuit et cum apparatu critico et exegetico instruxit D.E. Hill. 1983. ISBN 90 04 06917 8
82. DAM, H.-J. VAN. *P. Papinius Statius, Silvae Book II.* A Commentary. 1984. ISBN 90 04 07110 5
84. OBER, J. *Fortress Attica. Defense of the Athenian Land Frontier, 404-322 B.C.* 1985. ISBN 90 04 07243 8
85. HUBBARD, T.K. *The Pindaric Mind.* A Study of Logical Structure in Early Greek Poetry. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07303 5
86. VERDENIUS, W.J. *A Commentary on Hesiod: Works and Days*, vv. 1-382. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07465 1
87. HARDER, A. *Euripides' 'Kresphontes' and 'Archelaos'.* Introduction, Text and Commentary. 1985. ISBN 90 04 07511 9
88. WILLIAMS, H.J. *The 'Eclogues' and 'Cynegetica' of Nemesianus.* Edited with an Introduction and Commentary. 1986. ISBN 90 04 07486 4
89. McGING, B.C. *The Foreign Policy of Mithridates VI Eupator, King of Pontus.* 1986. ISBN 90 04 07591 7
91. SIDEBOTHAM, S.E. *Roman Economic Policy in the Erythra Thalassa 30 B.C.-A.D. 217.* 1986. ISBN 90 04 07644 1
92. VOGEL, C.J. DE. *Rethinking Plato and Platonism.* 2nd impr. of the first (1986) ed. 1988. ISBN 90 04 08755 9
93. MILLER, A.M. *From Delos to Delphi.* A Literary Study of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo. 1986. ISBN 90 04 07674 3
94. BOYLE, A.J. *The Chaonian Dove.* Studies in the Eclogues, Georgics and Aeneid of Virgil. 1986. ISBN 90 04 07672 7
95. KYLE, D.G. *Athletics in Ancient Athens.* 2nd impr. of the first (1987) ed. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09759 7
97. VERDENIUS, W.J. *Commentaries on Pindar. Vol. I. Olympian Odes 3, 7, 12, 14.* 1987. ISBN 90 04 08126 7
98. PROIETTI, G. *Xenophon's Sparta.* An introduction. 1987. ISBN 90 04 08338 3
99. BREMER, J.M., A.M. VAN ERP TAALMAN KIP & S.R. SLINGS. *Some Recently Found Greek Poems.* Text and Commentary. 1987. ISBN 90 04 08319 7
100. OPHUIJSEN, J.M. VAN. *Hephaistion on Metre.* Translation and Commentary. 1987. ISBN 90 04 08452 5
101. VERDENIUS, W.J. *Commentaries on Pindar. Vol. II.* Olympian Odes 1, 10, 11, Nemean 11, Isthmian 2. 1988. ISBN 90 04 08535 1
102. LUSCHNIG, C.A.E. *Time holds the Mirror. A Study of Knowledge in Euripides' 'Hippolytus'.* 1988. ISBN 90 04 08601 3
103. MARCOVICH, M. *Alcestis Barcinonensis.* Text and Commentary. 1988. ISBN 90 04 08600 5
104. HOLT, F.L. *Alexander the Great and Bactria.* The Formation of a Greek Frontier in Central Asia. Repr. 1993. ISBN 90 04 08612 9

105. BILLERBECK, M. *Seneca's Tragödien; sprachliche und stilistische Untersuchungen.* Mit Anhängen zur Sprache des Hercules Oetaeus und der Octavia. 1988. ISBN 90 04 08631 5
106. ARENDS, J.F.M. *Die Einheit der Polis. Eine Studie über Platons Staat.* 1988. ISBN 90 04 08785 0
107. BOTER, G.J. *The Textual Tradition of Plato's Republic.* 1988. ISBN 90 04 08787 7
108. WHEELER, E.L. *Stratagem and the Vocabulary of Military Trickery.* 1988. ISBN 90 04 08831 8
109. BUCKLER, J. *Philip II and the Sacred War.* 1989. ISBN 90 04 09095 9
110. FULLERTON, M.D. *The Archaistic Style in Roman Statuary.* 1990. ISBN 90 04 09146 7
111. ROTHWELL, K.S. *Politics and Persuasion in Aristophanes' 'Ecclesiazusae'.* 1990. ISBN 90 04 09185 8
112. CALDER, W.M. & A. DEMANDT. *Eduard Meyer.* Leben und Leistung eines Universalhistorikers. 1990. ISBN 90 04 09131 9
113. CHAMBERS, M.H. *Georg Busolt. His Career in His Letters.* 1990. ISBN 90 04 09225 0
114. CASWELL, C.P. *A Study of 'Thumos' in Early Greek Epic.* 1990. ISBN 90 04 09260 9
115. EINGARTNER, J. *Isis und ihre Dienerinnen in der Kunst der Römischen Kaiserzeit.* 1991. ISBN 90 04 09312 5
116. JONG, I. DE. *Narrative in Drama.* The Art of the Euripidean Messenger-Speech. 1991. ISBN 90 04 09406 7
117. BOYCE, B.T. *The Language of the Freedmen in Petronius'* Cena Trimalchionis. 1991. ISBN 90 04 09431 8
118. RÜTTEN, Th. *Demokrit — lachender Philosoph und sanguinischer Melancholiker.* 1992. ISBN 90 04 09523 3
119. KARAVITES, P. (with the collaboration of Th. Wren). *Promise-Giving and Treaty-Making.* Homer and the Near East. 1992. ISBN 90 04 09567 5
120. SANTORO L'HOIR, F. *The Rhetoric of Gender Terms.* 'Man', 'Woman' and the portrayal of character in Latin prose. 1992. ISBN 90 04 09512 8
121. WALLINGA, H.T. *Ships and Sea-Power before the Great Persian War.* The Ancestry of the Ancient Trireme. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09650 7
122. FARRON, S. *Vergil's Æneid: A Poem of Grief and Love.* 1993. ISBN 90 04 09661 2
123. LÉTOUBLON, F. *Les lieux communs du roman.* Stéréotypes grecs d'aventure et d'amour. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09724 4
124. KUNTZ, M. *Narrative Setting and Dramatic Poetry.* 1993. ISBN 90 04 09784 8
125. THEOPHRASTUS. *Metaphysics.* With an Introduction, Translation and Commentary by Marlein van Raalte. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09786 4
126. THIERMANN, P. *Die* Orationes Homeri *des Leonardo Bruni Aretino.* Kritische Edition der lateinischen und kastilianischen Übersetzung mit Prolegomena und Kommentar. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09719 8
127. LEVENE, D.S. *Religion in Livy.* 1993. ISBN 90 04 09617 5
128. PORTER, J.R. *Studies in Euripides'* Orestes. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09662 0
129. SICKING, C.M.J. & J.M. VAN OPHUIJSEN. *Two Studies in Attic Particle Usage.* Lysias and Plato. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09867 4
130. JONG, I.J.F. DE, & J.P. SULLIVAN (eds.). *Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature.* 1994. ISBN 90 04 09571 3
131. YAMAGATA, N. *Homeric Morality.* 1994. ISBN 90 04 09872 0
132. KOVACS, D. *Euripidea.* 1994. ISBN 90 04 09926 3
133. SUSSMAN, L.A. *The Declamations of Calpurnius Flaccus.* Text, Translation, and Commentary. 1994. ISBN 90 04 09983 2
134. SMOLENAARS, J.J.L. *Statius*: Thebaid VII. A Commentary. 1994. ISBN 90 04 10029 6
135. SMALL, D.B. (ed.). *Methods in the Mediterranean.* Historical and Archaeological Views on Texts and Archaeology. In preparation. ISBN 90 04 09581 0
136. DOMINIK, W.J. *The Mythic Voice of Statius.* Power and Politics in the Thebaid. In preparation. ISBN 90 04 09972 7

137. SLINGS, S.R. *Plato's Apology of Socrates.* A Literary and Philosophical Study with a Running Commentary. Edited and Completed from the Papers of the Late E. De Strycker, s.j. In preparation. ISBN 90 04 10103 9
138. FRANK, M. *Seneca's* Phoenissae. Introduction and Commentary. In preparation. ISBN 90 04 09776 7
139. MALKIN, I. & Z.W. RUBINSOHN (eds.). *Leaders and Masses in the Roman World.* Studies in Honor of Zvi Yavetz. In preparation. ISBN 90 04 09917 4
140. SEGAL, A. *Theatres in Roman Palestine and Provincia Arabica.* In preparation. ISBN 90 04 10145 4
141. CAMPBELL, M. *A Commentary on Apollonius Rhodius* Argonautica III 1-471. 1994. ISBN 90 04 10158 6
142. DeFOREST, M.M. *Apollonius'* Argonautica: *A Callimachean Epic.* 1994. ISBN 90 04 10017 2
143. WATSON, P.A. *Ancieni Stepmothers.* Myth, Mysogyny and Reality. In preparation. ISBN 90 04 10176 4
144. SULLIVAN, S.D. *Psychological and Ethical Ideas.* What Early Greeks Say. In preparation. ISBN 90 04 10185 3